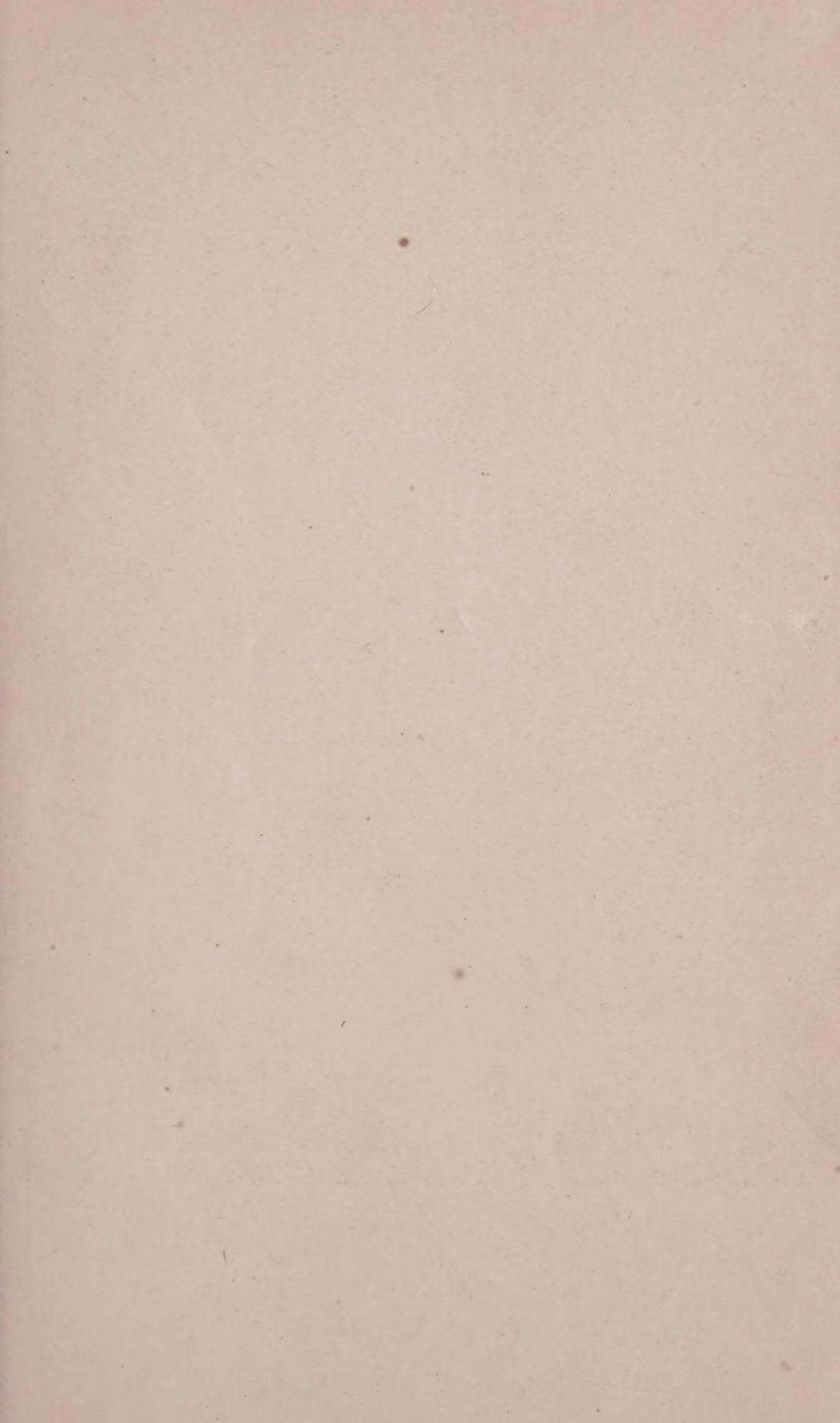


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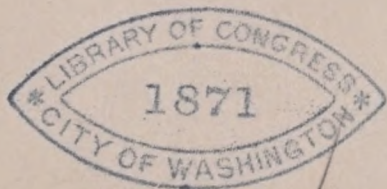
THE BOAT RACE. Page 49.

IN THE WORLD.

By MARY G. DARLING.

A SEQUEL TO

"BATTLES AT HOME."



BOSTON:

HORACE B. FULLER,

14 BROMFIELD STREET.

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IN THE WORLD.

CHAPTER I

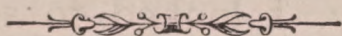
CHAPTER I

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"Class day at Cambridge is always rainy,"
 So runs the saying; but there are ex-
 ceptions to all rules, and surely this particular
 Class day, 18—, was one of them.
 Never had June sun streamed down on green
 trees with a more golden light than to-day;
 never had sky been more blue and cloudless,
 or grass more velvety and verdant.
 "Ah! I know it would never rain on Auburn's
 Class day!" cried little Stanley, gleefully.
 "And why not, Miss Pass?" asked old Mr.
 Osborne, amused at her burning face and dan-
 cing eyes—"all one snail," as he said.

IN THE WORLD.



CHAPTER I.

ARTHUR'S CLASS DAY.

"CLASS day at Cambridge is always rainy." So runs the saying; but there are exceptions to all rules, and surely this particular Class day, 18—, was one of them.

Never had June sun streamed down on green trees with a more golden light than to-day; never had sky been more blue and cloudless, or grass more velvety and verdant.

"Ah! I knew it would never rain on *Arthur's* Class day!" cried Lillie Stanley, gleefully.

"And why not, Miss Puss?" asked old Mr. Osborne, amused at her beaming face and dancing eyes — "all one smile," as he said.

"O, because Arthur always is so lucky, or — well, grandpapa, at any rate, things always *do* go just right with him."

"I don't know about that," said grandpapa, half discontentedly. "I did fancy Arthur would have given us a chance to hear him speak at the church. Why, I looked to see him orator, or poet, at the least."

"And so he might have been if he'd tried," Lillie rejoined.

"Just what I say," grumbled Mr. Osborne.

"O, never mind, grandpapa!" cried Miss Lillie, her delight at sight of the students pouring from the church quite depriving her of powers of discussion. "Bob or Jimmie will do that. Arthur's chief marshal, and that's something — isn't it? Only see how handsome he looks! And there's my Bob! O," with a bound of ecstasy, "*I am proud of my brothers!*"

Grandpapa, his good-humor restored by a hearty laugh at his little granddaughter, looked, and owned that Arthur, with baton and ribbons, was a goodly sight.

All our old friends are gathered in a window of Holworthy this bright June morning, and

while they await the return of the crowd from the church, we shall have time to look about us, and take up old acquaintances where we left them.

Six years do make a difference, certainly, at least in little people; so, though Mr. and Mrs. Stanley are scarcely changed, and grandpapa's white locks are no more silvery than when we saw him last, little Lillie has shot up into a damsel of eleven, with dignity befitting her years. Jimmie's pale face and great dark eyes are as noticeable at fifteen as at nine, and six years have made little change in his thoughtful, gentle expression; but who is this young giant beside him? — a stalwart, broad-shouldered young fellow, who overtops Mr. Stanley by half a head, and looks as if he could easily carry Jimmie with one arm, — can that be little Geoffrey? Certainly those are Geoffrey's dancing blue eyes, curly light hair, and roguish smile; but these are all six years have left us of the Geoffrey we once knew. Here is Colonel Guy Dalton in citizen's dress, and Mrs. Sue, a happy-looking, rosy-cheeked matron; and here is a little fellow of four years, with whom we have no previous

acquaintance. Here is — but now from the church streams a crowd of Class-day guests hastening to the spreads. The smooth gravel-walks and velvety grass-plats suddenly bloom with such abundance of summer bonnets and light dresses that the sober college grounds look like a gay old-fashioned garden. Clearly, Class day is beginning!

“Lift me up, cousin Geoffrey!” says, imperiously, the small four-year-old just referred to, and, from the height of Geoffrey’s shoulder, proceeds to make observation on the crowd below.

And now come hurrying in two young men, in whom it is not hard to recognize our old friends Arthur and Bob. This is Arthur, tall, slender, and handsome, with just the same air of easy self-possession that marked him as a boy — just the same pleasant, cordial voice and smile, and just the same care of his personal appearance. Faultless clothes, spotless kids, and a rose in his button-hole — “All so fine!” his little sister laughingly exclaimed, as he came up to them.

Bob is more changed. He has the same honest eyes, merry smile, and hearty manner; but the eyes have more of the earnest look that

sometimes flashed from them in old days, the smile has something more than mere good-nature in it, and the tone and manner, just as frank as ever, have grown less blunt and abrupt. It is plain, at the first glance, that Bob will never be a "lady's man," or a "society fellow;" but something has tempered his old roughness with just the softness it needed.

Nothing could be more warm than the greeting of both boys to the home party, and, at Arthur's welcome, Mr. Osborne's vexation over the failure of his high hopes in regard to his grandson's college honors faded away. (Anger was always so short a madness with grandpapa where Arthur was concerned!) But long after Arthur was engaged in giving graceful greetings to each of the arriving guests, Bob was still chatting away, in his boyish fashion, with the home party, romping with his namesake, Robin, laughing with his little sister, or talking with Guy.

The room was all alive now with the chatter of tongues, and the clatter of knives and forks. Pretty girls, attentive young men, matrons stout and smiling, papas bland or dignified, negro

waiters staggering under the weight of their huge trays; flowers, fans, muslins, and laces, — who does not know the atmosphere of Class day! Ices melted away like snow before the sun, stacks of salad and oysters vanished and left no sign, doorways and corners were filled to overflowing, and still in poured the guests.

But all through Arthur's welcoming words for those who had come, he seemed to be watching the door as if for some one who had not; and all through Bob's merry chat with the family party in the corner, he had an eye for that door too. In one of these casual glances he chanced to encounter the eyes of his little sister, which twinkled mischievously, as if to say, "I see!" Bob did not ask what the mischief in them meant, but privately determined to read Miss Lillie a lecture on the important lesson that little girls should not *see*, but be *seen*.

And now at the door appeared at last a very pretty girl, with fair hair, blue eyes, and a face so made up of rose-buds and sunshine that it is no wonder all eyes turned to look at her; and if she seemed to know this fact a little too well herself, why, all roses have their thorns, we

know, and Lillie Dalton was no more perfect at eighteen than at twelve.

At her entrance there was a general movement, as if she had been the one expected. Arthur dropped a sentence in the middle, and sprang to welcome Miss Lillie and her chaperone. Bob started forward without waiting to hear Lillie Stanley's "There she is!" Grandpapa exclaimed, "There's my pet!" Guy and Sue, "There's our Lillie at last!" and Miss Lillie was surrounded in a minute. There was quite a Babel of tongues — "Why didn't you get here before?" "We expected you yesterday evening;" "How late you are!"

"And was it not vexatious to miss the Pierian?" Lillie replied; "but it couldn't be helped. Aunt Bella always misses trains on purpose, I do believe — don't you, aunty? But never mind; I found plenty of welcomes all ready for me;" and with sparkling eyes Lillie looked over the top of her bouquet at Arthur.

"Those are *Arthur's* flowers, Lillie," said Lillie Stanley; "why don't you carry Bob's?"

"Because I've only got two hands, my dear," said Lillie, a little sharply; "don't you see the

other bouquet on my wrist? Of course I had to carry the chief marshal's to-day — and such a chief marshal too !”

Miss Lillie raised her hands in mock admiration of Arthur's badge and ribbons, and the next moment was frolicking with her little nephew, with perfect disregard of her dainty toilet and of her aunt's adjurations to have regard for her appearance. It cannot be denied that Lillie Dalton had grown in six years into a very charming girl, with a face that almost made one forget to look any farther. I do not mean that there was nothing more behind it; but beauty has its drawbacks even for its possessors, and those half years that Lillie still spent in New York were dangerous times for the little maiden. It was a good thing that summer brought her back to Lakeville, and gave her Guy's grave impartiality and Sue's steady good sense for daily companions. Just now, however, they were as eager in attention to Lillie as any one could have been, for a sunny face is a key that unlocks every heart, and Lillie's face this morning was as full of sunshine as the cloudless June sky.

“And so I missed nothing at the church by

being so late," she said to Arthur, "and you were not orator, after all?"

"I left that to my successor," said Arthur, good-naturedly. "Bob will do that for you."

"O, he needn't," she returned, with a vehement shake of her head. "A class orator has nothing to thank for it but popularity, after all; besides, I don't care one bit for college honors, first scholar, or anything else."

"You wouldn't say that if *Arthur* were first scholar," put in the younger Lillie, with great asperity; "but Bob will do it for all you say!"

Everybody laughed, and Geoffrey soothingly patted his sister's shoulder; but Lillie Dalton said, —

"That's right, little Lillie. Stand up for your pet brother, and be proud of him; that's the way I used to do with *my* brother, and I like you for it;" a reply which startled Miss Lillie so much that she had not a word to answer.

Everybody who has been to Class day knows what it is, and to those who have not, a description would probably have slight interest; so why should I describe all the spreads, the walks in the grounds, the dancing on the green, or the

crowds on the staircases of the old halls? People met friends and enjoyed themselves, or saw only strangers and thought Class day a long day. Dresses were torn, and their fair owners sustained the injury as stoically as one must on such occasions. There were cosy little *tête-à-têtes* in the deep old college windows, gay waltzes in the crowded hall, and heat and sunshine everywhere.

Bob, returning from a long expedition in search of Robin (who had given his parents the slip, and was finally discovered in Arthur's deserted room, surreptitiously feasting on the remains of a chicken salad which had made an impression on the young rogue's memory), strolled into Harvard Hall, where the dancing was going on fast and furiously. Having restored the young scapegrace to his anxious mother, he looked about for other friends, and, as might have been expected, quickly espied Lillie Dalton in the midst of the dancers. She was like a planet in being surrounded with satellites, but certainly not in being stationary, for one waltz succeeded another so rapidly, that Miss Lillie's roses were materially deepened, and had not time to fade.

"Won't you dance with me, Lillie?" said Bob, making his way up to her in one of the few minutes when she paused for breath.

"O, Bob, is it you at last? Where have you been all day? I'm sorry; but my card is full, and I haven't a fraction of a waltz for you;" and off she whirled again.

Now, Bob was not fond of dancing except with a chosen few, and, as he could not have Lillie, seemed to find the wall more attractive than the dancing-floor. But, as he leaned against it, his eye quickly encountered his little sister, sitting on one of the high window-sills, with a face so comically disconsolate that he could hardly help laughing as he made his way up to her.

"Why, Lilliekin! what is the matter? Your face is as long as the moral law."

"O, you dear boy, I am so glad to see you! Why, I feel deserted by all my friends."

"That's hard," said Bob, laughing. "And have you had no dancing then?"

"Only some stupid waltzes with Geoffrey's friends," the little lady replied, with a shrug of her shoulders. "And one doesn't come to Class day to dance with *boys*, you know. And Jim-

mie is gone to the Library, or the Hasty Pudding Rooms, and Geoffrey is off somewhere else, so I've nobody to speak to."

"Well, we'll speak to each other then," said Bob, laughingly. "Never mind, Lilliekin, you won't always be a wall-flower, I promise you."

"No, indeed," replied the little damsel, with spirit. "I mean to have my turn, too, some day. But, Bob, you need not laugh at me. I heard one of Arthur's classmates ask him who I was, and I am sure he would have asked me to dance with him, but just then papa came up, and said to me, 'Well, how is my little Pussy getting along?' And who could expect any *Senior* to ask me to dance after that?"

Lillie's look of mortified dignity was so funny that Bob laughed outright. His sister, naturally a positive little personage, from being the only girl, and the pet of so many brothers, had acquired an amusing feeling of age, so that her words and ways of thinking were often ludicrously in advance of her years. Her tongue, too, was a sharp little member, and might one day acquire for Miss Lillie a reputation for pertness, unless its edge wore off with her growth.

Her brothers, however, very seldom had the heart to find fault with her in any way, and Bob only checked his laugh to say, —

"Well, Lilliekin, come and dance with me. I shall *do* — shan't I, though I am only a Junior?"

"And shall I do, though I'm not the right Lillie?" said his little sister, archly, as she tripped off with her tall partner.

"Won't Lillie dance with you?" she asked, when the music stopped; and she paused, with sparkling eyes.

"*Can't*, not *won't*," said Bob. "She was engaged a foot deep before I could get to her."

"Now, Bob," said Lillie, vexed, as she always was when her favorite brother was supplanted in any way, "why do you always let other people get before you in what you want to do? If I were you, I'd have asked her before any one else had a chance, and have *made* her dance with me all day."

"Then I shouldn't have had a chance to dance with you, you know," said Bob, good-naturedly. "Let's try it again."

But now Harvard Hall was cleared of the dan-

cers, the marshals were seen running hither and thither, baton in hand, there was a mysterious dealing out of tickets, a stampede of some guests to favored windows, a rush of others to a portion of the grounds where pompous policemen, with many mandates to the impatient crowd, were enclosing a space around a certain elm tree.

"Now you're going to see them dance round the tree, Robin," said Colonel Dalton to the inquisitive little sprite perched on his shoulder.

There come the classes in scarecrow array — old coats, battered hats, a band of tatterdemalions in readiness for the rough-and-tumble fray which is a time-honored

"Way they have at Old Harvard!"

Whether the Freshmen broke through the ranks of the Sophomores, or *vice versa*, is not a matter of vital importance; a more interesting moment was it when, crowding round the tree, they leaped to snatch the flowers wreathed round its gnarly trunk. Here one deliberately measures the distance with his eye, runs and leaps; in

vain ; he is borne down by the struggling crowd. Another, more impetuous, springs upon the shoulders of his fellows.

"Hurrah !" cries Geoffrey. "Arthur's got the first flowers !"

"Arthur always will," said Jimmie, smiling.

Handfuls of the fragrant blossoms now strew the ground, or are seized as trophies of the vanished Class day, so long to be remembered in after years. They close again round the tree, and through the air ring the united voices, fresh and strong, in vociferous cheers for the President, the officers of the day, and each class in turn. A pause, and then the voices join again in the Class-day song : —

Four years have passed since first we met

As strangers in this place ;

Four years have passed — we meet again

As brothers, face to face.

And hand to hand, and heart to heart,

We stand here, side by side,

Once more united, ere we part,

In friendship, true and tried.

Chorus. — We own our pleasure's dashed with pain,

That Alma Mater ne'er again

Shall hold us 'neath her sway;
We feel our college joys are past,
We know this meeting is the last —
Yet we celebrate the day;
And ringing shouts from each classmate
Shall swell the cheers for —

“Auld Lang Syne” is, as every one knows, the breaking up of Class day, and after that the crowd separate for rest, refreshment, and preparations for evening strolls, illuminations, the singing of the Glee Club, and the President's Levee.

“Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And days of Auld Lang Syne?”

As the members of the class rushed through the ranks, exchanging fraternal “bear's-hugs” with their fellows, — a sight, which, despite its ludicrousness, has its pathetic side too, — Jimmie squeezed his twin's arm, exclaiming, while his cheek glowed, —

“O, Jeff, don't you wish our college days were here? And only think how soon they will be!”

Strange to say, Geoffrey did not answer with his usual merry voice; indeed, he actually sighed as he gave some monosyllabic answer.

And now the college grounds are quiet and empty, the streets filled with returning crowds and the rumble of carriage wheels. Soon the streets, too, are deserted; the golden sun has gone down in the glowing west; another Class day is over, and the Class of 18— are out in the world!

CHAPTER II.

THE ROAD BEGINS TO FORK.

"IT is no use; I can't stand it a moment longer!" and with these words Geoffrey closed his Lexicon with a sounding thump, and pushed his chair back from the table at which he and his twin had been studying.

"What is it, Geoffrey? The Latin?"

"Bother the Latin!" said Geoffrey, clenching his hands in his curls; "but that isn't what I mean just now. Look here, Jim;" and Geoffrey, leaning forward, rested his elbows on the table, and stared at his twin with all his eyes. "What I can't stand any longer is this: I can't stand being a selfish brute, trying to do what Nature never meant me for, and preventing you from doing what she did — there!"

"What do you mean, Jeff?"

And Jimmie looked up quickly, his lip trembling even as he asked the question.

"Just this, Jimmie. It is of no more use for me to try to get into college next year than it would be this year. I couldn't do it if you were to coach me steadily all the time between. And then, why *should* I go, particularly? Is there nothing else a man can do? And must he go pushing himself into places where he will do himself no credit, simply because other people can?"

"But, Geoffrey," said Jimmie, interrupting the tide of excited eloquence, "we were to go together, you know; we are always to be together. I am sure you would be ready by a year from now, if you would only think so."

Geoffrey rose, and came and leaned on the back of Jimmie's chair.

"Jim, dear," said he, — and his boyish, laughing face grew quite grave and manly as he spoke, — "I know you don't think me very wise, — and you are perfectly right, — but I've come to this conclusion all the same. It is no use for people to try to do things for which they are not fitted. I'm a very fine fellow in some places," — the smiles breaking out again, — "but college wouldn't happen to be one of them. You know how it is; I've got all the size, and you all the sense. So,

after a great deal of thinking about it, I have decided that I won't try to go to college at all. You won't mind — will you?"

Jimmie sat quite still, with his head on his hand. I don't know that he said to himself just the words, "The time has come, then, for us to go different ways;" but that was the thought in his mind.

"You don't mind, old fellow—do you?" Geoffrey repeated; and as Jimmie raised his head, the laughing blue eyes that met his, had just the April look they had had in Geoffrey's childhood. "You know we can be friends all the same, even if we're not always together."

Then Jimmie just opened his arms, and took in Geoffrey's curly head—in itself a most eloquent answer.

"And now," went on Geoffrey, cheerily, "I will tell you what it is. I want you to try for the college examination next week."

"O, no, Jeff! I couldn't go right off now, when I've always thought of going with you. Besides, I scarcely think I'm ready."

"Nonsense!" said Geoffrey, with a most emphatic nod of his head, and blow on the study-

table. "If Charley Osborne is ready at sixteen, don't tell me *you* can't go at fifteen. Now confess, Jim; you want to go right off more than anything else in the world, and were only anxious to wait till next year on my account."

With Geoffrey's honest, blue eyes so close to his, how could Jimmie do otherwise than confess?

"Hurrah!" cried Geoffrey. "Then it's all settled, and I've relieved my mind. You and Charley Osborne will be chums, and he'll look after you just as I should."

"And you, Geoffrey? What are you going to do yourself?"

"Time will show," replied Geoffrey, with a sage shake of the head.

"And so," said cousin Jack, "Geoffrey has actually kicked out of the traces—has he? The giant and the dwarf are not going to pull together any longer, I hear."

Cousin Jack's arm-chair is wheeled into the bay-window at Lakeside Hill, where, indeed,

most of our friends seem to be gathered this summer evening.

And how has it fared with this brave young soldier of ours during the past six years? Did his own strong will give him back his physical strength, and could he strike one more blow for freedom? That empty sleeve can tell the story without my words; yet why should I add any words of pity for its wearer? A true hero needs no commiseration, and Jack's brave spirit made him one. He needed no wounds to give him glory, no pity for his wounds when received. "A mere wreck!" does some one say, looking at the hanging sleeve, the limping walk, the face pale and thin, and often drawn with pain? Now, only look at his eyes, so bright, and full of life and love. Is that the expression of a miserable man, a burden to himself and every one else? No one in the world, not one of the party, but would cry out at the idea. That arm-chair is ever the centre of the group, and cousin Jack's words, as in old times, so light above, so solid underneath, are very oracles with every one of the cousins. I do not mean that there had not been times when the young man, crippled at the

very beginning of his life, maimed in limb and shattered in health, had not asked himself, bitterly, this very question : —

“Of what use am I in this world? A mere burden, and to be a mere burden all my life!”

But cousin Jack was, above all, a true hero in this : he could live down his own private suffering by himself, and never need to seek a confidant for his complaints outside his own breast.

To Fanny, Jack was simply all the world. From the time when he was brought home for the second time from the war she had devoted herself to him, supplying all his missing faculties, and never leaving his side. “It will be so all her life,” she says.

But I am forgetting that nobody has answered Jack’s question.

“Geoffrey,” says Mr. Stanley, smiling, “has discovered that it is only fitting for people to do that for which they are fitted, and a college career is not, he deems, his vocation.”

“For it is ‘beautiful’ only to do the thing we are meant for,” hummed Jack.

“Uncle Arthur,” said Fanny, impetuously, “what are girls meant for?”

"Why, Fanny!" exclaimed Lillie Dalton; "one would think you wished the whole tribe of girls out of existence. You're not going to be one of the dreadful strong-minded women—are you? That's the way they always begin. I'm sure I know what *I'm* meant for."

"What is a girl meant for?" repeated Mr. Arthur. "To look pretty, be admired, enjoy life, and finally, like the virtuous heroines in story-books, bestow her hand on some deserving young man, and be happy ever after."

"Now, Arthur," said Fanny, with great decision, "if you cannot give a better opinion than that (which hasn't even the merit of originality), I advise you not to offer any. I shall disappoint you in all those predictions."

"Fanny," said her brother, softly pressing her arm, which rested on his chair, "has no hand to bestow. She has made over her right hand to her brother, and she thinks she is entitled to keep the left in her own possession."

"That comes nearer the truth, Jack," said his sister, smiling at him brightly. "But, uncle Arthur, you have given me no answer, and I am

in earnest. What are girls good for in the world, as they live nowadays?"

"Come to my study some time, Fanny, and I'll tell you," said Mr. Stanley, who saw that Fanny was too much in earnest for the rest of the group, and sympathized with the feeling which he knew was working in her girl heart too fully to wish that she should do it injustice by speaking of it then and there.

"But to return to Geoffrey," said Jack, helping out Mr. Stanley's purpose; "what is the boy going to do with himself, now that he has begged off from college?"

"I don't think he is quite ready to say, as yet," replied Mr. Stanley; "so I leave him to himself for a little while longer, sure that he will work out his loophole in the world in good time. There is a good deal of wisdom in Geoffrey's giddy pate, after all."

"Speaking of 'giddy pates,' said Jack, "only think of our Charley a would-be Freshman! Well, I anticipate much benefit for Charley from the hazing of some well-meaning Soph! I wonder, by the way, how the boys are getting on; is it not almost time for them to be here? They

should not be late when anxiety for their welfare has brought all the family together."

"What a responsibility one's brothers are!" said Lillie the Less, with a very grown-up air. "I'm sure I couldn't stand the suspense of having another brother examined."

"Dear me, little Miss Lexicon!" said Jack, laughing. "You're not getting up any fears on Jimmie's account — are you? He's sure to pass all right."

"Still it is an anxious time," said Mr. Stanley. "Geoffrey's been running between Boston and Cambridge for the last two days, hanging round Harvard Hall, and bringing early and late bulletins with as much diligence as if some important battle were going on. I do believe the boy feels as if the examination were his own, after all, for he talks about '*our* papers,' and '*our* examiners,' and really seems more nervous than Jimmie himself."

The library at Lakeside Hill is less changed than its inmates: except for the scattered blocks and toy-wagons on the floor, testifying to the presence of Master Robin even while he sleeps, it might be the room of half a dozen years ago.

Mr. Osborne sits in his great crimson arm-chair, resting his head on his hand, just as he used, and watching the bright little handful of fire, which he will have, even on a summer evening, crackling on the hearth. The tables and book-cases look at us as if to say, "How are you, old friend?" Sue sits with her work just as she sat when we first saw her, and Guy is never out of place at Lakeside Hill. And yet there is a change, too, in the dear old room: that arm-chair, on the other side of the fire, is empty now, and Mr. Osborne's eyes often wander from the flickering flame to that seat, as if he missed something. In these years that are gone, grandmamma has quietly slipped out of the home of which she made so large a part, and, as it often happens in such cases, each one finds out that he never knew what the kindly voice and loving presence were, till they are vanished forever. It was because grandpapa found his old, happy home so grievously changed, with only the empty chair in the other chimney-corner, that Guy and Sue consented to give up their own new little home, and come to make one for grandpapa at Lakeside Hill. So Sue's bright face shines through the house all

day, Robin's fresh little pipe sings up stairs and down, and Guy is always at hand when there is any question of care or responsibility. But none of these can quite make up to the old man for the face he misses.

Lakeside Hill is always the rendezvous when any matter of general interest is on the carpet; and who does not know the general anxiety and suspense when a college examination is pending? What fearful possibilities harass all minds, and make breakfast, dinner, and tea a burden! What ambition fires the soul of partial mothers and sisters! What eagerness that their darling should — not do himself justice (there is no question of *that*) — but *be done justice to!* What unsettled days, and disturbed dreams! What longings for it to be all over!

"Here come Gulliver and the Lilliput," announced cousin Jack at last, "with Charley bringing up the rear."

All flew to the window as if the three boys were an unparalleled spectacle; but, at sight of the approaching trio, all fears took flight. Geoffrey led the van, triumph beaming in his face and dimpling his cheeks. At sight of the party

in the window he waved his hat, and broke into an exulting —

“ See the conquering *heroes* come ! ”

“ What news ? ” cried Lillie, leaning from the window.

“ Hurrah ! ” cried Geoffrey, bursting into the room. “ None better ! Jimmie is through, scot-free ; Charley has a mere nothing of a condition. I couldn’t have done better myself, if I had been there ! ”

Everybody laughed at this astonishing avowal. Jimmie glowed all over his pale face, while his twin and Charley ran on with flaming accounts of his prowess in the examination-room ; though, true to himself, his happiness was shown in very quiet fashion. Not so with the others ; for the home fireside is a place where even easy victories gain gigantic dimensions, and this evening was a jubilant one.

CHAPTER III.

STUDY TALK AND COLLEGE RACES.

THERE was one room in the plain little Boston house, where the Stanleys lived, which belonged to every one, and where every one felt at home; and this, too, was a room which was supposed to be Mr. Stanley's peculiar property — his study. Was there a difficulty to be got out of, or a decision to be made, the study was the place of all others to solve the problem. Had this one a happiness that wanted a confidant, or that one a sorrow that needed sympathy, uncle Arthur's study could furnish all that was wanted. Countless were the heartaches that had found a cure in that shabby little room; and if Mr. Stanley were asked how he found time for so many hearings, he always answered, smiling, "There is time for any one who comes to me."

One rainy afternoon, then, Mr. Stanley was

sitting in this room, busy with books and papers, when at the door was heard one of the knocks he never called "interruptions." His "Come in" was like a welcome beforehand, and the door was quickly opened by Fanny Osborne.

"I've come to you, uncle Arthur —" she began, in her usual impetuous fashion, not even stopping to take off the water-proof, on which the summer rain-drops lay glistening.

"I see you have come," said he, smiling; "but I am not going to run away; so why not take off your cloak, and sit down?"

Fanny laughed, and throwing off the wet garment, drew a footstool close to the study-chair, and looked up with a face which was brighter for the little delay.

"And now," said Mr. Stanley, "you have come to me."

"Yes," said Fanny; "and because — uncle Arthur, I want something to do."

"So does every one," said Mr. Stanley; "but, Fanny, you have plenty of energy, and plenty of occupation; why have you any reason to complain of that want?"

"I want something more," said Fanny. "I'm

not happy. Uncle Arthur, I want something to *live for!*"

Mr. Stanley did not speak; so she went on, hurriedly, and with increasing earnestness: —

"You mustn't think me selfish, uncle Arthur. I know I have Jack, and he's all the world to me. I hope I am something to him. I want nothing better than to love him, and be with him all my life; but I want to be more to myself. I want to feel that I am living for something, and being something, though I *am* a girl."

"And being everything to Jack is not enough for you?"

Fanny shook her head.

"Not enough to keep me always satisfied and happy as I should be with him; not enough to keep me from always wishing and longing for something more. O, uncle Arthur, how much happier girls would be if they had a definite work to do in the world, as boys have! What are they good for now?"

"So much, Fanny," said Mr. Stanley, "that I can hardly stop to tell you at this moment. No matter now. I think I understand and sympathize with you perfectly. You mean you would

like some aim to which to turn your life; something to stay with you always—to get up with you in the morning, to be with you rainy days, and make your thoughts as bright and cheerful as if the sun were still shining?”

“Yes,” said Fanny; “what satisfies other girls doesn’t seem to satisfy me. I used to find happiness enough in just what came along—parties, visits, pleasant times; but it isn’t so any longer. I want something to fill up the *time between*. I used to think—I suppose all girls do—that when I grew up I should marry, and, as Arthur and the story books say, live happy ever after. But now that I am grown up, that is all changed. I don’t think I ever want to marry. Jack is enough for me—besides, I should like to prove for once that a girl *can be happy in some other way!*”

Mr. Stanley laughed.

“That sounds like Fanny Osborne,” said he. “Well, my dear, I honor your feeling, however you may express it. I know you want to take a real share in life’s work, not sit down and wrap up your talents in a napkin because you are not a boy.”

"Yes, that is exactly it," said Fanny, heartily. "I am well and strong; I am as bright as some boys, and have more ambition than most. So why should I be a burden all my life, just because I happen to be a girl? I really do not see why any talent I may possess should run to seed for that reason."

"Nor I, Fanny," said Mr. Stanley. "So don't look at me as defiantly as if I were your oppressor. I think that a woman's right to *work* is something no one should grudge her, whatever opinions he may have about women's rights in general."

"And I am sure," said Fanny, half laughing, half crying, "I don't want to put on blue spectacles, and be a doctor, or mount up into a pulpit, and crack my feeble little pipe against the church roof!"

"But it is one of the consequences of the world's getting on so slowly," pursued uncle Arthur, "that women have got to find their work for themselves for the next twenty-five years to come — not have it ready made for them. It is not every one, Fanny, who can leave home to work; that is the place, you

know, for girls to prove what they are good for."

"O, uncle Arthur," said Fanny, half reproachfully, "you don't think I want to leave home — do you? Why, I wouldn't if I could; and how could I, while my dear Jack can't so much as eat his dinner unless I am there to help him! All I want to feel is that my powers are not going to sleep, because people might think it odd if I used them. All I want is to work at home at what I believe it is in me to do."

"Then, Fanny," said uncle Arthur, heartily, "I can only say to you, 'Whatsoever your hand findeth to do, do it with all your might.' Anybody, man, woman, or child, who feels that he has had a power given him, and does not use it, is very like the man who hid his talent in a napkin. Go to work, my dear, and God speed you!"

"How much better I always do feel," Fanny said, smiling, as she took up the wet cloak, — "how much better I always do feel when I come to this dear little room, and tell you just what I am thinking about! I should think you would call it your *confessional*, uncle Arthur, you must hear so many secrets here."

Her uncle smiled ; but, as he helped her put on the cloak, he said, more gravely, and in a low tone, " You said, Fanny, dear, that you wanted something to fill up the time *between* your pleasures — you mean the dreary, every day places in life. Now, there is but one thing, you know, which can do that satisfactorily for you ; all the plans and purposes in the world can't help you without it."

" I know what it is," said Fanny, looking up with earnest eyes ; " and I do care for it, uncle Arthur, even when I seem most giddy and thoughtless. I have poor Jack, and his suffering, and his patience to thank for teaching it to me."

She shut the door, with a face very quiet and bright, and Mr. Stanley went back to the study-table, feeling that something had been gained, not lost, in the half hour which had slipped away.

There must surely have been some good reason why the family lingered so long at Lakeside Hill this summer, when the first heat generally found them at Rockedge. There certainly was ; for,

besides that all-important college examination, were not the Worcester races to take place in the last week of July, and was not our Bob in the boat?

The first intimation of this great fact Lillie derived from a plate of very unsavory-looking beefsteak, which was set before Bob the first evening they met at table.

"Are you going to eat *that*?" she exclaimed, repugnance strongly expressed in look and tone.

"*'Beefsteak and gruel are the chief of my diet,'*" replied Bob, laughing.

"He's stroke of the Harvard," explained Geoffrey, proudly.

"But is that any reason why he should eat his meat uncooked, like a South Sea islander?"

"I'm training, you know;" and after that, it seemed to Lillie, all reasons for Bob's doing things, or leaving them undone, were to be ascribed to the same general cause. Did he go early to bed, rise at break of day, run a mile in the evening, eschew tea and coffee, look with redoubled disfavor on Arthur's cigars, and disappear at regular intervals during the day for purposes of "pulling," — all was to be set down to this com-

prehensive training, till Lillie, tired of hearing from the indefatigable Geoffrey of boats and races, was ready to pronounce the regatta at Worcester a bore before it came off.

Not so, however, when the day came, with a bright sun and plenty of fresh excitement and interest to enliven it. Magenta badges must be prepared; all the party, from Guy to little Lillie, bedecked therewith, and thus manifesting their loyalty to old Harvard at every button-hole, the merry cavalcade set forth for Worcester, whither Bob and the "boat" had already repaired on the preceding day.

As the long-drawn-out, heavily-laden train reached the station, what a bustling scene met the eye! Drivers of omnibuses shouted in every key, major and minor, the words, "To Lake Quinsigamond! Ready for the Lake!" while people, pouring from the train, piled on the vehicles till it was a wonder the horses could stagger under their load.

"Twenty on top, forty inside, half a dozen more on the step," commented Geoffrey; "shall we get there whole, I wonder?"

But no mishap had occurred when they reached

the shore, which was already covered with the gay crowd, hurrying to secure their places for the approaching show. Long tiers of seats had been built up, and the bare boards were speedily blossoming out with every imaginable hue of raiment. Magenta and blue ribbons fluttered in the breeze; tongues chattered, and eager eyes were fixed on the water, fearful of losing a moment of the race. Timid maidens shrieked over their insecure perch, absorbed old gentlemen outraged the sensibilities of their neighbors by oblivious pokes of the umbrellas which *must* be carried to Worcester races, no matter how bright the sun may shine. The crowd poured over the fields, till every inch of standing room was occupied, and all the multitude were as one individual in the eagerness with which they watched the blue water.

The boats have started, and already deafening shouts of "Harvard!" "Yale! Yale!" pierce the air. How the heart of each one of our little party swells with pride as he or she looks at the Harvard boat, where sits Bob, shoulders thrown back, teeth set, every nerve and muscle strained to its utmost tension. He is, of course, the central object in the landscape to all the Lakeside

Hill party ; but are not all the crew like brothers for the time being, and is not every motion of those forms bending to the oar, every rise and fall of the bare, brown arms, watched as if a life hung on the oar-blades? With strong pulls the boat shoots through the water ; with rapid strokes the Yales follow close behind. What ! are they gaining? or is it only that the distance is too great for us to see distinctly? Telescopes and opera-glasses sweep the horizon. Quick — tell us — which is it? Yale gaining fast — yes, actually a fraction in advance ! Groans and cheers from the excited crowd mingle confusedly, hearts leap into throats, and Lillie feels a wild, unreasoning wrath against her neighbor on the bench, a damsel fluttering with blue ribbons at every point, and uttering a treble “Yale ! Yale !” with every breath. The spectators spring up from their seats to watch more closely the contest ; the slightly-built tiers crack beneath the strain ; there is a crash, and a downfall, and nobody to pick up the wounded !

“Yale still in advance !”

“O, Geoffrey, look once more !” And Geoffrey, towering above the crowd, his ruddy face

actually white with suspense, again reports the disheartening tidings.

Is the victory, then, to be lost? Never, Harvard, never — never while Bob Stanley is in the boat! Suddenly Bob bends to his oars as if something gave him double strength, the men catch inspiration from his fire, the boat springs forward with the impetus, and shoots ahead of her rival. The victory is ours — won in glorious time; yet what an age it has seemed! " 'Rah! 'Rah! 'Rah!" The monosyllabic Harvard cheers have the field to themselves now, and the race is over.

"What a study of resolution Bob's face was!" said Colonel Dalton, laughing, as he put up his glass. "If he only puts all that determination into his life by and by, he'll always come out first in the race."

The crowd had deserted the benches now, and were pouring over the fields towards the station. Hurry and confusion were the order of the day, for, while they had been so absorbed in watching the water, the clouds had been gathering thick, till the bright sun of the morning was veiled in darkness. Low growls of thunder were

heard at intervals, there was a faint flash of lightning, and presently, with a sudden rush, down pattered the rain-drops fast and pitiless, on new and old dresses alike. The crowd scattered in every direction; some ran one way, some another, and our party were widely sundered. Arthur, the gallant, offered one arm to Fanny, the other to Lillie, while he unfurled a large umbrella over the heads of both.

"A vote of thanks, General Apropos!" said Fanny. "You never more richly deserved your name."

The rain now descended in sheets, the storm-stricken crowd almost ran each other down in their eagerness to reach a place of shelter. Fanny laughed merrily, from under her water-proof hood, at the *mêlée*, while Lillie, less prudent in her preparations, groaned over her drenched finery.

At last they reached their destination. A loaded train was just backing into the station. Scarcely had it stopped when it was boarded by fresh relays of passengers.

"They need not hurry themselves," said Arthur, laughing; "that train is going the wrong

way. I suppose our train is delayed, and we must wait a while patiently."

The train whistled off, the station was still occupied with impatient and rain-bedrabbled waiters, and still the wished-for conveyance came not.

"I do believe," said Fanny, at last, "that we've missed it, after all. Just go and ask, please, Arthur, when the next train goes."

Arthur went, and returned speedily with a long face.

"That was really the Boston train, after all," he said, with some chagrin. "How could I get so turned round in my bearings?"

"Natural excitement," said Fanny, good-humoredly. "And when does the next train go?"

"At half past eleven," said Arthur, somewhat reluctantly.

Well, there was no help for it, and the trio, somewhat crest-fallen, repaired to the hotel to pass the intervening time. Arthur was much piqued, as people, who pride themselves upon their good management, are apt to be when betrayed into stupid mistakes, and Lillie, to tell the truth, was somewhat pettish. The little lady

was best suited to fine weather, after all, and did not show so sunny a side under the trying circumstances of wet clothes and a long, uncomfortable delay at a crowded hotel. So she sat discontentedly at the window, choosing to give Arthur rather monosyllabic answers in return to his solicitude for her welfare. But Fanny's good temper, like her cloak, was weather-proof; and since they must needs be delayed, why not make a virtue of necessity, and enjoy themselves? Her lively sallies kept the other two laughing in spite of their mutual chagrin. As evening advanced, Worcester became a very tumultuous scene. The gay crowd had, for the most part, gone home; but troops of students roamed through the streets, filled the hotel, and made the town uproarious with their songs and cheers. Lillie even became somewhat alarmed as the noisy shouts rose from the dining-room below, and real tears of vexation filled her eyes when Arthur's repeated orders for refreshment received no response.

"You see I'm no longer a student, Lillie," he said at last, still as pleasantly as possible, though pettishness from other people is not apt to keep

the temper of vain mortals smooth. "If Bob were only here we should be treated like princes."

"I heartily wish he were," said Lillie, and withdrew to her window, in dudgeon. Arthur turned to Fanny, with a little shrug, as if to say, "What can I do but let her alone?" and the little party was rapidly becoming an uncomfortable one, when who should pass the window but Bob himself in the midst of the cheering and becheered crew! As fortune chanced, he raised his eyes as he passed their window, telegraphed astonishment at sight of Lillie's melancholy visage, and was in the room before she had time to report him to the others.

"Why, how in the world —" he began; but before he could finish his sentence, he was beset with congratulations and exclamations from all three.

"O, Bob, what a triumph for Harvard!"

"O, Bob, how splendidly you rowed!"

"Was it not a sight?" said Bob, his face beaming with satisfaction. "I'm proud of our boat — but do tell me how you came here."

And while Fanny narrated their misfortunes, Bob's face became more radiant every moment.

"Now, this is very nice!" he said, heartily. "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll join you, and go home. I shall be so glad to get rid of all the feasting and riot, and we'll spend just the cosiest two hours up stairs here before that train goes!"

"But, Bob, you meant to stay," said Fanny.

"Never mind; I shall be glad of an excuse. Worcester is a disgraceful scene after one of the races, and I shall be heartily glad not to be here. It is a pity, but nevertheless true, that good students and splendid rowers are not always gentlemen."

Affairs wore a very different aspect now that the "stroke" had joined the party, and the negligent waiters became all obsequiousness. Their door was besieged with offers of service, the wet clothes dried quickly before the bright little fire that was so comfortable this damp, chilly evening, and Lillie's spirits went up many degrees in the scale of cheerfulness. For the same reason that she had treated Arthur with reserve, she was all affability to his brother, and Bob was at a loss to know whether his own merits or the exploits of the crew were to be thanked for Lillie's cordiality.

The two hours flew by quickly, and, when the party started for the station, all agreed that the delay had been an improvement on the original programme.

"You don't know how proud we felt of you, Bob!" said Lillie, in the cars. "Now, as Guy says, if you only put as much determination into everything, how proud we shall always be!"

"Even if I should try to win the race of scholarship?" said Bob, laughing.

"Of course," said Lillie. "I know you mean to do something in college, and I know, too, that we shall be proud of you there."

"Why, I thought you did not care a bit for *college* honors, Lillie," said Bob, with a queer twinkle in his eyes.

"You foolish boy," Miss Lillie returned; "do you really believe all I say? Why, if you should be orator or poet, don't you know that I should be just as proud of you as Jimmie or little Lillie?"

Bob's face flushed, as it was apt to do when he was extremely pleased; but he said nothing.

The home party had, of course, been thrown into great anxiety and confusion by the non-

appearance of the two girls; and knowing, by experience, that in cases of family agitation, Lakeside Hill was the surest and quickest place for communication with the many, the boys proceeded thither at once with Lillie and Fanny.

"When Arthur was chief marshal on Class day, Lillie wouldn't speak to Bob," said little Lillie, reflectively, "and now that Bob's boat has won the race, she won't even look at Arthur."

"Upon my word, little miss," said grandpapa, who was always greatly amused by his granddaughter's smart speeches, "your sagacity is beyond your years. There's a coat, Miss Lillie, all ready to fit people who always go with the winning side!"

"Lillie is very wise," said naughty cousin Jack. (He had come to Lakeville to hear the first tidings of the races.) "She remembers Miss Edgeworth's excellent moral tale, 'It is well to have two bows to one's string!'"

It was not till Lillie's head was laid on her pillow that she became aware of cousin Jack's mischievous perversion of the sage proverb.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CAT OUT OF THE BAG.

I THINK you will have learned, by this time, without needing my assurance for it, that Lillie Dalton was a capricious little mortal. It is certain that none of us are entirely consistent (if we were, we should be far on the way to that ideal perfection which no mortal ever attains) ; but this little lady was such a union of good impulses and faulty practices, fits of sweet temper and moods of uncertainty, that it was difficult to know just where to have her. Her mode of life was, doubtless, much to blame for this instability ; for, in spite of Guy's desire that his sister should, after his marriage, be constantly with him, Mrs. Melville's house in New York was still Lillie's home for half the year. The truth was, that when the time came for the aunt and niece to separate, Mrs. Melville, who was really fond of

Lillie, begged so earnestly that she might have her still sometimes, and Lillie herself cried so heartily at the idea of leaving forever the aunt Bella, who had been the only mother she had known during her orphaned childhood, that Guy had not the heart to part them.

So the winters and summers of Lillie's life were spent under very different auspices. The good impulses took root under Sue's influence, the caprice and waywardness owed their rise to Mrs. Melville's indulgence. But with all the outside taint of worldliness and vanity, which was to be ascribed to the same source, Lillie had such a loving nature of her own, such generous admiration for the virtues of her friends, and such honesty in confessing her own frailties and short-comings, that it is no wonder every one of the Lakeside Hill party loved her, and felt all the attractions she possessed so abundantly.

No two girls could be more different in character than Lillie and Fanny Osborne; and Sue, who saw so much of both, was often amused by the contrast in their ways of thinking and talking.

"What are you dreaming about, Fanny?" she said, one summer afternoon, when she and the

two girls were paddling lazily about the smooth water near the beach at Rockledge.

"Only building air-castles," said Fanny, with a laugh and blush; "summer is a nice time for doing that."

"Summer is a good time for thinking about what one's going to do," said Lillie; "but my castles are not so airy as yours, Fanny. They will all come true some day!"

"Tell us what they are, Lillie," said Sue.

"O, they are all about next winter, when I shall 'come out' in New York. I plan all my parties and my dresses, and think how I shall enjoy being a belle, and making every one fall in love with me."

"*Making* every one, Lillie?" said Fanny, laughing. "You don't mean you shall set about it deliberately, do you, and try to make people unhappy?"

"I don't think I should mind much," said Lillie, with great candor. "I think I should like to try a little, to see if I could. I don't think any one could be very unhappy about *me*!"

"Only hear her, Sue!" said Fanny, amused. "Doesn't it sound like the naughty children who pull out flies' wings 'just to see if it hurts'?"

"Lillie doesn't mean all she says," said Sue, more gravely. "I am sure she means to be something better than a flirt."

"But, Sue," said Lillie, hanging her head a little as she made the avowal, "I am afraid I should like extremely to try how much I could make people care for me. I do now, sometimes. Is there anything very bad about that?"

"I think you might find something better to put in your air-castles, Lillie," said Sue, in the same tone.

Lillie said no more for a moment, for she had the heartiest affection for Sue, and the warmest respect for her opinions; but she did not like to take back her assertions too readily; so she presently went on.

"I only mean that I want to have a good time in life, Sue. I am sure everybody else does, too, if they are only honest enough to say so."

"Of course, my dear," said Sue, "nobody is unwilling to be happy; but there are a great many different kinds of happiness in the world, and yours, you would soon find, would not be the best sort."

Lillie made a little impatient gesture, but said

nothing. As they neared the shore, however, where the white foam was rolling in, red and golden with the reflected colors from the sinking sun, Fanny said, mischievously, —

“Here comes Bob to help us ashore. Shall I tell him, Lillie, what you mean to do? I think it only fair that people should be warned.”

“No, don’t!” said Lillie, hastily. “I wouldn’t have Bob know I said such a thing for the world!”

“Why not?”

“Because I want him to respect me, and he wouldn’t — or yes,” added Miss Weathercock, veering round in a breath, “tell him, if you want to — I don’t care!”

She sprang ashore as the boat touched the sand, and ran after Sue, leaving Fanny laughing at the sudden change of mind, which she was, nevertheless, too kind-hearted to take advantage of.

No one had asked Fanny what she put into her air-castles; and yet, as it happened, they were growing to be quite solid structures.

After her talk with uncle Arthur in the study, Fanny took fresh courage in her secret purpose,

whatever it might be, and during those hours when she was sure that Jack did not want her, and which she had generally spent in amusement or exercise, was frequently shut up in her little room, doing something very busily; what it was remained a mystery, and the more that nobody suspected its existence. (The true way to keep a secret, dear friends, is not to let any one suspect that you have one!) Fanny had always been called independent, and allowed to have her time at her own disposal, and choose her pursuits for herself. So, very possibly, while she was shut up in her little room, she was supposed to be somewhere else.

Jack, however, had no such belief. He had noticed the unwonted animation and life that had dawned in Fanny's face since her talk with uncle Arthur had confirmed her purpose, and now set his sharp wits to work to find out the cause for it. He had noticed, too, what a strong attraction that quiet little room seemed to have for Fanny, — a new thing for his lively sister, — and suspected that there must be something "in the wind." For a time he was silent, and only quietly furthered her opportunities for solitude by every means in

his power, often feigning to prefer to be left alone, when in truth Fanny's merry chat would have been most welcome. But he soon became tired of such entire disinterestedness, and began to long that Fanny would share her secret with him — even to feel a little pained that she did not. At last he resolved to break the ice himself.

One evening, then, Fanny, thinking Jack safely in bed, had betaken herself to her beloved task for one short half hour of bliss before seeking her own couch. Secure, as she thought, against interruption, she had left her door a crack open; and while she sat, absorbed, with her back turned to the entrance, a tall figure, in dressing-gown and slippers, appeared at the crack. He reconnoitred carefully, and became aware that Fanny was sitting at her desk, scribbling away so fast that her pen sounded as if it were skating across the paper. He stood for a moment in visible surprise and amusement, then softly knocked. Fanny was too absorbed to heed the left-handed tap, and did not raise her head. So her brother noiselessly opened the door, and stole over the carpet so softly that she did not hear a footfall, and never knew of his approach till she felt a hand on her shoulder.

She started, dropped her pen with a slight scream, and looked up. Jack was standing beside her, looking at her with a face half merry, half reproachful.

"What! Fanny burning the midnight oil, and never consulting her brother about her abstruse studies?"

"I was only — only writing a little, Jack," said Fanny, coloring and stammering, as she hastily shuffled the papers together.

"Nay, my dear," said Jack, putting his hand on hers to stop her, "if I had known I should disturb you, I wouldn't have come in for the world. Keep your secret, Fan. I'll go back to bed again, and never remember by to-morrow morning that I caught you with a pen in your hand."

There was something a little sad to Fanny in the kindly way in which Jack's bright eyes looked at her as he spoke. They seemed to her to say, "Did you want to keep anything from your brother, Fanny? Couldn't you trust me with your secret and your interests, and don't you know how I would have made them mine?"

Her conscience smote her; she dropped the



papers, and held out her arms to her brother, exclaiming, "Jack, don't go! I didn't mean to be cross. I will tell you all about it. You shan't think I have any secrets from you."

But when Jack turned immediately, and sat down on the arm of the chair, Fanny found it hard to begin. Jack took up her right hand, and pointed, smiling, to a blot on her middle finger.

"That looks suspiciously like an authoress, Fanny."

"O, Jack, don't laugh at me, please! It's something I've wanted to do all my life. I wanted something to do, and I talked with uncle Arthur, and he told me I need never lose any talent I might have, because I was a girl; and so I am trying to do this. And O, if I can only write books, and print them, how happy I shall be!"

Fanny's excitement and incoherence had found relief in two large tears, which were rolling down her cheeks as she looked up at Jack.

Her brother put his arm round her neck, and drew her head down on his shoulder.

"And so the little girl found her life empty — did she? and wanted something to fill it up?"

"Yes, Jack; and then, O, it would make me

so happy to feel that I wasn't a burden, but that I could do something for myself, if I *wasn't* a boy!"

It was a thoughtless speech, and for a moment Jack's face flushed; but before he could speak, Fanny's arms were round his neck.

"O, Jack, what a girl I am! Do forgive me."

"Nonsense!" said Jack, cheerily; "what for, pray? You don't suppose I'm sorry to have made over a limb or two to Uncle Sam—do you? Well, go on, Fanny. So, being perfectly strong and well, as you say, and having plenty of brains, you decided to use them—did you? Make name, fame, and fortune by your pen?"

"O, Jack! Only try what I could do."

"Well, Fanny, you're a brave girl, and I heartily admire you. Now I've only one more thing to propose before I leave you to your meditations. Let me take all this trash back to bed with me, and put myself to sleep with it."

He tapped the papers, and looked at her, laughingly.

"O," said Fanny, putting out a hand to guard her treasures, "I am afraid you will laugh at me."

"So that's your courage — is it?" said Jack, amused. "Am I such a pitiless critic that I'm more to be feared than the whole public? Come, Fanny, dear, don't be afraid of me. I'll promise you won't find any warmer interest than mine shall be."

Fanny never could resist Jack's tone of entreaty. She bundled up all the papers on the instant, and thrust them into his hand.

"There, take them; take them all!" she said. "You shan't think I'd keep a secret from you, Jack."

"Then a kiss, and good night!" And off he went, leaving Fanny to lie awake, and ponder, half regretfully, on the fact that her mystery was revealed.

When she went to her brother's room in the morning, she found him all ready to receive her, the papers lying near him. She advanced, half timidly, not daring to look him full in the face.

"Courage!" said Jack, laughingly. "Hold up your head, Fanny. I don't think them altogether bad." Then, as she raised her eyes, "You silly girl, don't look so frightened; you don't want

me to say they're downright good — do you? Come, then, they're first rate, Fanny! I'm pretty proud of you. How did you ever learn to write like that, and never let me know, eh?"

"O, Jack," said Fanny, coming close to the sofa, and clapping her hands in intensity of delight, "do you really mean it? Do you think I ever can do anything?"

"Ever, you goosey? Why, of course you can. There, there, don't pull me to pieces in your ecstasy! Yes, Fanny, you have talent, and I'll venture to promise you success at some day not very far off."

"O, Jack, will you help me? Then I have not a wish left in the world."

Jack's eyes actually filled with tears as Fanny rapturously hugged and kissed him.

"Poor little Fanny!" he said. "Had she been so unhappy then, without telling anybody a word about it?"

"No, indeed, never unhappy while I have you. But, Jack, I shall be so much more *satisfied* now that I have something to work at; and something, too, in which you will be interested."

Jack lay still for a moment, stroking his sister's

hair gently, as if there were something more he wished to say. Presently it came.

"Suppose we work together, Fan. Do you know, a long time ago, I used to think of doing this very thing? Indeed, I have done it a little in my young days, before I was the patched old log I am now. Now don't smother me because I said that! Well, when I was first wounded, and lay there on my back, I began to write out some of my experiences, and think I would make a little book some time out of my war recollections. Then came the going back, and put everything else out of my head; and when I came home—O, Fanny, I've got out my papers again and again, turned them over, and then looked at my left hand, and thought of my stupid, aching head, and just put them back again."

Fanny had laid her head down on the sofa cushion, and had a quiet little cry, while Jack had been speaking.

"And you never came to me to help you, Jack?"

"Ah, you see we mistrusted each other," said her brother, shaking his head. "The worse for me! Ah, Fanny, who's the burden, I should like

to know? Who's the useless member of society, you or I? Well, well, neither of us, then! But what do you say? Shall we enter into partnership, begin a joint literary career, and take the world by storm?"

"I wouldn't change places with any girl in the world!" was Fanny's somewhat irrelevant answer.

CHAPTER V.

A LOOPHOLE OPENS FOR GEOFFREY.

THERE are periods in the experience of every domestic circle when the affairs of the individuals composing it, after going on for years in calm, unchanging tenor, seem suddenly to have reached a crisis. The peaceful order of home life is broken in upon, and every one feels that what has been once, can never be again. Such a crisis in the experience of the Stanley family was this summer. Each individual seemed to have come to the period when he must choose his career for himself, and the family highway had reached the point where it branched into several narrow roads.

In the first place, Arthur was to go to New York. Mr. Melville, Lillie Dalton's uncle, was a very prosperous merchant there, and Arthur had been offered a position in the firm. "Such

an opening was not to be neglected," nor was Mr. Arthur at all indifferent to the pleasant prospect which New York society offered to him.

Jimmie, as we know, was to enter on his college life. As for Geoffrey, his career was still hanging in the balance. It was Mr. Stanley's way to leave people considerably to themselves—that is, never to press them to a decision, or hurry them into adopting a purpose, sure that in time, if the wish were an earnest one, or the bent were in the twig, it would eventually show itself.

Meantime, Geoffrey was evidently pondering his future course. He was far more quiet and thoughtful than his wont, and his laughing face was often grave and preoccupied, his merry voice unheard for a wonderfully long period.

"Bob," he said, at last, one evening when the brothers had been sitting on the piazza for some minutes in silence, "do you never think what you are going to do with yourself after you're through college?"

"Of course I do," said Bob. "How can you ask such a question?"

"Why, I can't imagine being so long in decid-

ing. I'm sure, were I in your place, I should have made up my mind long ago."

"Perhaps I may have made up mine now," said Bob, smiling. "It's not impossible."

"Yet you've never said a word."

"There's a difference between saying and thinking — isn't there, Bob?" said Mr. Stanley, suddenly stepping out of one of the long windows which opened on the piazza. "I'm not afraid that your decision will not be made before the time comes. And now, Geoffrey, for yours, since I think your mind is made up."

"Yes, it is," said Geoffrey, sitting upright in the hammock, where he had been stretching his lazy length. "Father, I want to go to sea."

"So I supposed," said Mr. Stanley; "so you have told us all your life, Geoffrey. I knew you gave up college because a naval school was more attractive."

"But, father, that isn't all. If it were only that I wanted to go to a naval school, I should have spoken before. I have been thinking a great deal about it, and I have decided that I want to go to sea before I go to the naval school. I don't feel as if I could settle down

quietly yet. I want to see something of ships, and adventures, and a sailor's life."

"For any good reason, Geoffrey, or merely from the love of roving?"

"I think," said Geoffrey, frankly, "that the love of roving has something to do with it. But I should honestly like to see something of the real life before I begin to study about it. I should like to go off in a ship, and see the rough side of being at sea. I should understand it all so much more thoroughly then. Are you willing?"

"You would find it a pretty rough experience, Geoffrey," said Mr. Stanley, whose face had been growing graver as Geoffrey spoke. "The life of a sailor-boy and the company of rough tars would be a great change to a boy brought up as you have been. Your idea of a sea-life would lose all its romance at once."

"That's just what I want," said Geoffrey, earnestly. "Then I could be sure whether it was what I wanted to do or not."

Bob, who had been standing by, silent, turned, and gave Geoffrey a hearty slap on the shoulder.

"Good, young one!" said he. "Why, father,

Geoffrey is turning out a wise-head, after all! That is the most sensible speech I ever heard him make in my life."

"Very true, Bob," said Mr. Stanley, who still looked grave; "but neither you nor Geoffrey must forget what a sea-life is. You can hardly tell so well as I, how much there would be which would be distasteful to a boy of education and refinement. Remember, too, to what temptations he would be exposed. Geoffrey is very young."

"But there are temptations everywhere, father," Bob replied. "I don't know that Geoffrey at sea is any more out in the world than Jimmie at college. I heartily like, too, what he says of seeing the practical side of it. Then, as to the unfitness of the life for any one of refinement, why, as I look at it, the more that is put into a life, the more comes out of it. The boy is in earnest, father — why not let him go?"

Bob's pleading of Geoffrey's cause was so hearty, sympathetic, and earnest, that Geoffrey put out his hand, and, under cover of the darkness, gave his brother's hand a good squeeze. And Mr. Stanley said, smiling, —

"Well, Bob, you're a good advocate. I will

think it over, Geoffrey, for I see that, as Bob says, you are in earnest. We must wait a good opportunity, however, whatever the decision may be."

And there the matter was left.

It is seldom that "good opportunities" arrive in the nick of time, and Geoffrey had nerved himself to wait for a long term of probation. But his proposed patience had its reward in advance. Only a few days after the talk with Mr. Stanley, there appeared unexpectedly at dinner a certain Captain Hawley, an old friend of grandpapa. This gentleman was one of the earliest recollections of the Stanley boys, and from their childhood had held a place in their regard as a benevolent friend, who turned up at widely separated intervals, took the most lively interest in them and their concerns, and made himself acceptable to them by presents and wonderful seafaring stories. To Geoffrey, especially, was Captain Hawley an object of interest, and, from the days when Geoffrey had worn petticoats, his taste for sailors and ships had enlisted the captain in his favor.

At sight of the visitor a flush and sparkle

came into Geoffrey's cheeks and eyes, which said, as plainly as words could say it, "Here is my chance!" Even in shaking hands with Captain Hawley he turned and looked at his father, coloring to the roots of his hair with pleasure. That look made way with Mr. Stanley's reluctance.

"Well," he said to his wife, a little sadly, "why should we oppose the boy in his wish, when his happiness is in question? There is nothing wrong in his purpose, and I am selfish in opposing his choice in life because it is a hard sacrifice to us to let him go."

And thus it was settled. I suppose one scarcely knows how hard it is for a father and mother to give up their own cherished wishes for a child, and make way for what they find will constitute his happiness. But you will think my story getting into too grave a vein, and, indeed, Lillie Dalton thought this summer quite too grave a one to precede her proposed gay winter. Captain Hawley was to sail very soon on a long voyage to China, and Geoffrey was to accompany him.

"Of course I am perfectly happy," he re-

peated many times after the plan was all settled, and yet Geoffrey's face was often a very grave one. It is a serious matter when the young birds in the nest begin to stretch their wings, and Geoffrey, despite his love of adventure, had always been looked upon as the youngest, the home pet.

"King Barnacle has fairly slipped out of his shell," said cousin Sue, shaking her head with rather a sober smile.

Geoffrey had begged that the family might go back to Lakeside Hill early in September, that his last remembrances of home might be the dear old place; and, as Jimmie was to go to college at the same time, they gladly complied with the request, and the summer at Rockedge was a short one. I will not say anything of the parting talks of the twins, because I still think that good-by words are the saddest that can be said, and I do not wish you to think this wholly a story of sad things.

"Dear me! even Prissy has the blues!" said Lillie Dalton, coming disconsolately into the library on Geoffrey's last evening at home. "I went down to the kitchen to get a little cheered

up, and there was Prissy sitting by the fire, crying over Geoffrey as if her heart would break. 'You've always been my favorite out of all of 'em, Mr. Geoffrey, dear,' said she. (Only think how Geoffrey used to plague her life out!) 'There isn't one of 'em all to hold a candle to you for size, or looks, or anything. And to think that you should be the one of all others to go and be drowned!'"

"Cheerful view," said Arthur, laughing off Prissy's lugubrious foreboding.

"Wasn't it? And then she went on: 'And only to think of the doughnuts I used to fry for you, and you stealing them as fast as I could fry; and how long it will be before I can make you any more!' 'Make some this minute, Prissy,' said Geoffrey, 'and I'll engage to eat them every one.' And the poor old thing got up and kissed him, and I do believe she is frying away now, as hard as she can, and getting happier with every doughnut. But I had to come away—it makes me think so of old times."

"'Old times'—how much that means!" echoed Fanny. "All our old merry games, and the 'J. G. T.' Why, there'll be nobody left for that when little Lillie's turn comes."

"O Fanny, you make me bluer and bluer," said Lillie, dolefully. "Do try to think of something to make the evening a little less dismal."

Thus exhorted, Fanny and Arthur laid their heads together, and finally withdrew into a corner, where they scribbled away for some time, whispering and laughing over the paper, as if to dispel the grave looks of the elders. When Geoffrey came up from the down-stairs regions (leaving Prissy somewhat comforted, let us hope, by the wholesale demolition of her doughnuts), the pair came out of their corner, and called a convocation of the "J. G. T." Then they all sat down on the hearth-rug, round the cheerful fire, which danced in the corners of the old room as blithely as if it would fain light up all the sober faces there, and Fanny read aloud what she and Arthur had been scribbling:—

THE VALEDICTORY OF THE "J. G. T."

DEAR friends, as hurrying years roll by,
And bear us on, we wonder why

Our views so changed should be.

We wonder, too, at hearts so gay,
That not a thought beyond the day

Disturbed their "J. G. T."

Ah, "Tempus fugit!" Truth so old
Becomes new truth, whenever told,
And boys must change to men,
Light-hearted girls to women grow,
And later years, too well we know,
Can't bring old times again.

How many things step in between
To claim us in the busy scene,
The *whirl* we call the world!
To men, their life-work fresh each day,
To women, 'tis enough, they say,
To *let themselves be whirled!*

But come, dear friends, your sleepy eyes
Beseech me not to moralize,
But straight my purpose tell;
This, then: our childhood is outgrown;
Yet, ere old toys aside are thrown,
Let's pause to say farewell!

Farewell to dear old childish sports;
For nobler aims and graver thoughts
Fill manly hearts to-day;
Bright dreams to maiden fancy rise,
Gay visions dazzle girlish eyes, —
Each goes his separate way.

Our marshal proudly leads the van,
Marks out his course on Fortune's plan,
And seeks a wider field.

Shall rosy clouds still gild his morn,
Ribbon and badge his breast adorn,
And Commerce riches yield?

The swift and strong shall win the race,
The best boat take the foremost place,
By sturdy *strokes* impelled.

May the same spirit lead through life,
And nerve our Bob, in sterner strife,
To hold the place he's held!

Our home birds have their nest outgrown,
And boldly flutter forth alone,
On tender wings untried.

Yet have no fears for gentle Jim;
The college life, to boys like him,
Presents its purest side.

Unmoved he'll on temptation look,
The world for him a larger book,
O'er which, absorbed, he'll bend;
No taint of college vice come near,
Nor e'en of college tricks he'll hear,
Save from some luckless friend!

King Barnacle eschewed his shell,
And Geoffrey, bursting bonds as well,
Shall launch out on life's main,
In stately ships shall ride the wave,
Shall shipwreck, storm, and danger brave,
A sailor's daring gain.

Nor are our maidens left behind;
The leading thought in Lillie's mind
Is, *in the world* again!

In fancy, now, the gas-lights glance,
She sees herself leading the dance,
A slaughteress of men!

So widely sundered "J. G. T."?
Shall then no link of memory
Hold us together bound?

No lingering thought of home remain,
No fond regret, no tender pain,
In severed hearts be found?

Yes; wheresoe'er our lot may be,
This slender thread of memory
Shall bind us to each other;
The thought of him in bygone days,
The leader of our merry plays,
Our cousin, friend, and brother!

Obedient to his country's call,
He sacrificed health, strength, and all
That makes the charm of life;
And, though no more a sword he'll wield,
Is still a soldier in the field,
A hero in the strife!

The thought of home in every mind,
The thought of dear ones left behind,
Beside the fireside still;

The thought of her whose puny might
Would prove itself in life's hard fight,
And wield the goose's quill!

Then say not we are far apart;
A common thought, a loving heart,
Can bridge the widest sea.
Our friendship still shall bind us fast,
And once again unite, at last,
Our scattered "J. G. T."

"Is that yours or Arthur's, Fanny?" asked Guy, as Fanny finished reading the poem, amid the applause of the "J. G. T." (though, as Lillie said, it was a question whether it made them feel any gayer).

"O, Fanny's," said Arthur. "I don't scribble at such short notice. I only polished off a period or two, here and there."

"Fanny might do something with her pen, if she chose," said Guy—a rejoinder at which Fanny telegraphed smiling looks to Jack.

But why should I linger over the breaking up of the home circle? Days come as surely and as soon, however we may dread them; and that night was no longer than any other because Geoffrey was to sail on the morrow. Nor would any

amount of packing and preparation make the hours of the morning more than sixty minutes long, or put off the time when the family party stood on the wharf, looking a last look after their sailor-boy. There he stood on the deck, waving his cap to them, and trying to wear the sunniest smile in the world, though, as little Lillie said, "it was a very watery sun!"

"Don't be down-hearted, Mrs. Stanley. I'll take good care of your big baby," were cheery Captain Hawley's parting words; and Bob and Jimmie drew their mother's arms through their own, as if to assure her that she was not left alone. And so the ship sailed away, and they stood and watched till Geoffrey's blue jacket was the merest speck. Then it disappeared entirely, and they knew that their sailor-boy was drifted out into the world!

Jimmie had been too busy in comforting his mother to have much time for his own loneliness; but he was glad that he was to go out to Cambridge to-night for his first taste of college life. Change of scene is a great protector against the blues; and as Jimmie trudged manfully off with Bob over Cambridge Bridge, he

was very thankful to have college to think and talk of.

Not so with the party at home. The little house that had shut in so much brightness within its narrow walls seemed to have grown suddenly dark and gloomy. The rooms that had echoed to so many noisy, joyous voices, seemed strangely silent and dead, and little Lillie, and Arthur, ready to start with the morning for New York, a poor substitute for the three merry boys whose chairs stood empty. Still, every one made a manful effort, and resolutely chatted and laughed.

"This is the time when people begin to find out the value of girls," said Lillie—a speech which, under the circumstances, would have sounded somewhat heartless, had not Mr. Stanley understood so well his little daughter's composition, and recognized the words as so many staunch protests against rising tears. And, sure enough, when bed-time came, Lillie, being missed, was discovered curled up on Geoffrey's deserted bed, asleep on the pillow she had wet with her tears, and was hugging in her arms as if it were a piece of Geoffrey's self!

Mr. Stanley stood for a minute looking in at the room where the twins had spent so many happy hours, so united even in their difference. "There are no birds in last year's nest," he said, smiling sadly, and softly shut the door.

CHAPTER VI.

LILLIE'S DEBUT.

NOW that our home-party is so widely severed, that what I tell you of one will no longer be true of the others, now that their life, interests, and surroundings are so different, I shall have to adopt the rule of "one at a time," and take you about with me to give you bird's-eye views of each. And so it happens that on this afternoon, late in November, we find ourselves in New York, and in Mrs. Melville's parlor, just at the time when twilight shadows are falling fast, and people who have no pressure of occupation on their hands, are apt to sit in the dark, chat over the fire, or doze as they wait for dinner. So Mrs. Melville and Lillie were occupied this afternoon, Lillie walking from fire to window and back again, while her aunt strove vainly after the nap which she always so indignantly denied indulging in.

"How restless you are, Lillie!" she said, at last. "You wander about the room so that there is no chance of getting a moment's peace or quiet. What is the matter?"

"I believe I'm thinking of to-morrow night," said Lillie. "I wish it were fairly over. I do dread my first 'big party,' and having to give it myself, too: it frightens me only to think of it."

"Now, Lillie, I do beg of you—" said her aunt, pathetically. "If there is any one thing upon which I must insist, it is perfect self-possession in society. There is nothing so entirely ill-bred as flutter and agitation. But I always did say that Guy was to be blamed for the way in which you pass your summers; how is one to acquire *manner* in such a 'little girl,' row-boating, sand-paddling life as that?"

"You need not be afraid for me, aunt Bella," said Miss Lillie, a little piqued. "I know quite well how to behave, thank you. It is only that I want to please people; and how can I tell whether I shall do that till I am fairly 'out'?"

"There is no reason why you should not, Lillie," said Mrs. Melville, in the same almost plain-

tive tone. "You have beauty and style enough, I'm sure, and if your uncle's wealth and position can't give you standing as a belle, I don't know whose should. It all depends upon yourself, and I should never dream of having a doubt of you, if it were not for these odd ideas you sometimes come out with so perversely. Your sister, Guy's wife, is a most excellent girl, I'm sure. I said so the first time I ever saw her, and she is not to be blamed if her bringing up has made her a little old-fashioned. Now that advice, in one of her letters to you, about spending your time, was excellent in itself; very praiseworthy at Lakeside Hill; but *here* —"

"I'm sorry I showed you Sue's letter, aunt Bella," said Lillie, flushing.

"Why, my darling girl? I'm sure nobody could have appreciated it more than I; it is only that a girl must expect to give up something her first winter in the world. I'm sure she has enough to think of in taking a proper stand in society; and I know my little Lillie will not disappoint me, after all the hopes I've formed for her."

The coaxing tone rather grated on Lillie's mood just then.

"I can't make people like me if they won't," she said, half-pouting.

"But, my love, what nonsense to suppose they shouldn't! All I ask of you is, to let people admire you for yourself, as they can't help doing, and not shock them with any of the independent notions you sometimes come out with. Then, too, Lillie, you must not be too fastidious; a man's eligibility does not depend entirely upon his character, you know, and your little head is so full of Mr. Stanley's ideas, that I am sometimes a little afraid of you. But come," — seeing a cloud on Lillie's brow, — "I am reading you a long lecture — am I not?"

"And I don't need it, aunt Bella," said Lillie, her conscience giving her a little prick, as she remembered the talk at Rockedge, and her honesty convicting her of sufficient readiness to attract, without the inducement of her aunt's maxims. "I only feel a little nervous at the idea of to-morrow."

"O, well, that is natural enough, and will wear off very quickly," Mrs. Melville said, soothingly. "I am glad you will have Arthur as an escort this winter: he is really very handsome, and his man-

ner is enough in itself to make him a favorite. But mind, Lillie, you are not to let people suppose there is any understanding between you; such a thing is a serious disadvantage to a girl during her first season."

"There's Arthur come to dinner," said Lillie, as the front door shut with a bang; a welcome interruption she felt it to a speech which made her feel uncomfortable. Mrs. Melville's speeches always *did* make her feel uncomfortable when she was fresh from Lakeside Hill. As Arthur entered, she found it a relief to greet him with more than usual cordiality.

"O Arthur, I'm glad to see you! Have you heard from home to-day?"

"Good evening, Arthur," said Mrs. Melville, graciously. "You must reassure Lillie for me. She is very nervous, I find, about to-morrow night, and the impression she is going to make in the gay world."

"She need have no fears," said Arthur, laughing, and adding aside to Lillie, —

"She sees herself leading the dance,
A slaughteress of men!"

Then aloud, "Yes, Fanny keeps me supplied with all the home news. Her pen goes as fast as her tongue, and her letters are as good as being on the spot."

"What a dear bright girl she is!" said Lillie, affectionately.

"O, she's a trump," said Arthur, speaking with much more naturalness than was his wont. "I'm confident Fanny will surprise us all some day."

"I wish she were to be here to-morrow night," said Lillie; "but she never will leave Jack. And Bob, too — won't he come on, now that you are here?"

"He means to run on in vacation," said Arthur. "You'll be a reigning belle by that time, Lillie!"

"Arthur," interrupted Mrs. Melville, who had been growing a little impatient under all this Lakeside Hill chat, when something of so much greater importance was on the carpet, "I am looking forward to seeing a great deal of your friend this winter. I heard that Mr. Lenox was a great favorite in society here last year; no wonder, indeed, with his wealth and position! You are very intimate with him — are you not?"

"Steve and I have always been cronies," Ar-

thur replied, with a little uncomfortable glance at Lillie. "We are talking of being chums this winter."

"Then we shall hope to see a great deal of him," was Mrs. Melville's gracious rejoinder.

"I always did hate Mr. Lenox," said Lillie, rebelliously.

"O, my love," said Mrs. Melville, in despair; "do let me beg of you not to be so positive in your assertions. Come, Arthur, you must help me with Lillie; she is very full of whims to-night."

And let us hope that Mrs. Melville and Arthur succeeded, between them, in preparing Lillie for her first launch in the world.

In truth, she had been very full of whims that night; but it was only the little agitation of a girl anxious to be admired, and entering on a hitherto untried experience. All the nervousness was dispelled when, on the morrow, she surveyed herself in the glass as she stood arrayed for her first ball, and realized, with a pleasurable thrill of triumph, how beautiful she was. She seemed to be in the very midst of the untried world now, and to feel her power. Her heart beat, her cheeks flushed,

her eyes sparkled, and she went dancing down the stairs, as if she could not wait for the guests to arrive and the music to begin.

That evening was enchantment to her all through — the lights, the waltzing, the crowded rooms, the flowers, the flattering looks and words. From her childhood Lillie had dearly loved both gayety and admiration, and had had her full share of both. But that had all been but the play and make-believe to which this was the reality. This was her debut into the real world — the opening of a brilliant career. She gave herself up to the delight of the sensation, and enjoyed her own party as heartily as any of her guests — with a freshness, too, which would have attracted attention without the aid of her beauty.

"Your niece will create a sensation among us, Mrs. Melville," said Steve Lenox to his smiling and complacent hostess. "She will make an era in New York society."

And Mrs. Melville bowed and smiled, delighted at the assurance of the "old young man." Steve Lenox was not a person whose opinion was to be thought lightly of. (Is it so with any young man who is independent, and has a large fortune at his

own disposal?) He had been in New York for the last two years, making a play of doing a little business, "just to keep him from growing rusty," and making a serious business of going into the gay whirl of society. Arthur's evil genius was always sure to be at his elbow.

The evening went like a flash, and Lillie lived it all over again in her sleep, with the music ringing in her ears, and feet that danced all through the night in dreams. Now that the gates of Fairyland were fairly opened to her, what a region of delight she looked at! Every new invitation was a fresh enchantment, and every vacant evening a weariness. Yes, Lillie was fairly in the whirl now; and it requires a pretty steady head not to be carried down in the vortex. Going into the world is an absorbing thing; and in the delight of being a belle, Lillie found her interest in other things beginning to grow faint.

"Of course I shall keep up my music, and take French lessons just the same," she had said to Sue, before leaving Lakeside Hill. But the puzzle was to find time for anything in this whirlpool. There were those nice early morning hours, just after breakfast, when the piano at home had been

used to ring so blithely through the house under the touch of Lillie's fingers. But now, why, a girl can't be up night and day, of course; and those early hours were generally spent in recovering the lost freshness of the evening before. Then, "after breakfast," nowadays, was well on towards calling hours, and there is no use in trying to practise with the door-bell ringing constantly. Then the afternoon went in driving and dressing, or, if Lillie ever did find a vacant half hour, she was sure to be summoned by a seamstress, or dress-maker, and made a lay-figure for silk or *tarletane* draperies.

"It was no use," Lillie said, despairingly; "the time all *went*."

So the piano was shut, and turned into a conservatory for Lillie's bouquets, and dust gathered on the leaves of her French dictionary. When she flew to the hall table, as she came in, it was to look, not for home letters, but cards and invitations. So much time to this party, and, after that, so much time to the next; between whiles, dresses to be got ready for them all, and Mrs. Melville to live over her niece's triumphs in her self-satisfied, complacent manner. Flowers left at

the door, a long vista of excitement all through the days, and at night the Fairyland again, with its freshness, by this time, a little worn off. Such was Lillie's life during this first season; is it much wonder if she had little time or thought for anything outside of or above it?

"I think it is weeks since we had a sight of Lillie's handwriting," said Guy Dalton, as day after day passed at Lakeside Hill, without any of the little notes which used to be so frequent.

"O, a girl's first winter in society is so absorbing!" Sue answered, with her long-suffering charity.

"H-m," said Guy; "all things in moderation."

So said Mr. Melville, as morning after morning brought Arthur to the counting-room, late and languid, with a head too dull and aching to be clear enough for business details. "Parties may be all well enough for you and Lillie, Bella. But if young Stanley ever means to do anything in business, he must give up all this ball-going. That style of thing may be very well for a fellow like young Lenox, who has his nest already feathered; but young men who have their own row to hoe, can't afford to stop by the way to dance all round it."

CHAPTER VII.

AT HARVARD AND AT HOME.

WHILE Lillie Dalton was thus setting the ball-room world on fire, and Arthur Stanley was engaged in the abstruse science of figures after the *German*, matters in Boston and the classic shades of Cambridge were progressing in more every-day fashion. I suppose that Sophomores will still be oppressors, and Freshmen oppressed, till the end of time; that each successive class will be the finest ever known, and each successive band of classmates the "best fellows in the world," in the twenty-fifth as in the nineteenth century. The college world goes on improving to the end of the chapter, if students are to be believed.

Jimmie Stanley was very happy at Harvard. True, he saw it in a somewhat one-sided way, for he had never fairly learned Mr. Stanley's lesson

of a world outside of books, and the want of Geoffrey at his elbow, to supply the deficiencies of his nature with his own sharply-contrasted tastes, threw him more and more upon himself. But no boy ever more thoroughly appreciated the opportunities of college life; and if one's true happiness lies in study, why not indulge in it? Yet Jimmie did not incur the censure of his classmates as a "dig" (a keen term of collegiate reproach), for his lovable qualities had always made him popular among them, so far as his reserve would let him be known, and there was not the slightest tinge of pedantry about his love of learning. He simply found his deepest joy in books, and, absorbed in them, was neither a sharer in the pleasures, nor in the mishaps of his chum, Charley Osborne.

Bob Stanley was universally conceded to be one of these "best fellows in the world." There was something about him at once so earnest and so light-hearted, so frank and fearless, and yet so steady and true, that he was everywhere popular. His prowess in the boat and with the baseball bat, made him a champion in the athletic half of the class; his good standing and ready

talents procured him respect with the scholastic portion. So in his senior year he stood high in the hearts of his fellows, and the mantle of his popularity sheltered Jimmie as well.

On a certain winter evening, Jimmie was sitting with his books in Bob's room — always a quiet retreat when Charley Osborne's frequent broils with tyrannical "Sophs" made his own room too hot to hold him. Bob had just steered his last mathematical pupil safely through the straits of a hard problem, and turned from the closing door to the roaring fire and comfortable arm-chair, when he caught sight of Jimmie, sitting with his elbows resting on the table, his eyes fixed, not on his book, but on the fire, with such a wistful expression that Bob stopped short, poker in hand. There must surely be something serious on Jimmie's mind to divert it from his beloved page; so Bob, laying down the poker, put his hand on Jimmie's shoulder, with a —

"What, Jim! in a brown study? Or what has given you such a down-hearted look? Do you miss Geoffrey so much still?"

"Yes, always, Bob; but it isn't that to-night."

"What then? Isn't college what you ex-

pected? Has it turned out a disappointment, after all?"

"O, no; but —"

"Come, Jimmie," said Bob, smiling, as he leaned on the back of Jimmie's chair, "out with it! You know I have been a safe confidant any time these ten years."

"I know, Bob. It is nothing very much; only college is not quite what I had expected it to be in some ways. There are some things I never imagined I should know about, much less see here, and it makes me feel sad to learn about them now."

Bob's smiling face grew grave as Jimmie spoke.

"Ah, Jimmie!" said he, "one can't stay a child forever. I don't believe it is best for us that we should. People have to look at things with their eyes open, and take their choice; otherwise, you know, we might as well go in leading-strings all our days."

But Jimmie shut his eyes, and turned away his head. "There is no looking and choosing for me, Bob; it only makes me feel wretched, because I know the evil's there."

"I know there's no temptation for you, my

boy," said Bob, heartily. "You go through life on a very easy road, Jim, dear; but however wretched it makes you to know how much wickedness there is in the world, I still say it is better for some of us to see both sides, and choose our own path."

"Then you've never had my feeling, Bob?" Jimmie said, wistfully.

"Yes, indeed! Why, Jimmie, no boy comes to live in a place like this without finding out a great deal he never knew before. I think it the best way for him to know about it all—the evil as well as the good—ay, and even come pretty near the bad himself, if he only turns the other way in time. There's nothing like experience, Jim, for teaching one to help other people."

"Do you mean, Bob," asked Jimmie, timidly, "that you ever came near 'the bad,' as you say, yourself?"

"Twenty times," said Bob, his bright face growing graver. "If I had not, Jimmie, I should never dare to hope I might some day help other people who are where I might have been."

Jimmie sat still for a moment, thinking, his eyes still fixed on the fire.

"Then you think there is some chance of helping them, Bob?" he said, slowly. "I am only wretched when I think of evil that there is no hope of curing."

"Hope? Of course there's always hope!" said Bob, cheerily. "Courage, Jim, dear; when we see people sticking fast in miry places, we don't sit down and lament over the mud, but hold out a stick to the bog-bound."

Jimmie smiled at the simile, and at the moment, announced by the hasty clattering of his boots on the bare staircase outside, Charley Osborne burst into the room, his ringing voice and boyish presence dispelling the shade of seriousness that hung over the two brothers as effectually as a fresh breeze will roll away a mist.

"Ah, here you are, Jim!" he cried. "Now, I really must protest against this wholesale desertion of me for you, Bob. No sooner is my chum gone than the Sophs get wind of it in some mysterious manner, and descend upon me in a body; ten minutes after Jimmie left the room to-night, there wasn't a whole square of glass in our window-frames, nor, if I hadn't hap-

pened to be near a closet door, should I have had a whole square inch of skin left."

"Then you really rely upon Jimmie as a defence?" said Bob, laughing. "I rather think he deserts to me because he fancies himself considered a clog to your warfare."

"Ah, but you see he acts as a bulwark!" said Charley, with a grimace. "Beg your pardon, Jim; but it is a fact that if the Sophomores know you're in, they let me alone. It is inexplicable, Bob; but for some reason all Sophs have the most implacable hostility towards me."

"Probably you inflame their animosity," said Bob.

"On my honor, no; it must be something in my presence that excites them, as a red rag does a herd of cattle. Why, Bob," said Charley, perching himself in a colloquial attitude on the foot of the bed, "you wouldn't believe all I've been made to suffer!"

"I can easily believe your tale of broken windows," said Bob.

"O, that doesn't count," returned Charley, "because I expect Jimmie to suffer as much in point

of temperature and pocket as I do. I only complain of my own private and peculiar grievances. I've been tossed in a blanket, Bob, till I could see nothing before my eyes but green and yellow stars. I've been tossed, with my knees smeared with pitch, till I thought, each time I went up, that I should remain suspended, like Mahomet's coffin, between earth and heaven — let alone the damage done to my trousers! I've been made to sing songs till I was hoarse, though I never knew one note from another. I've been forced to stand treat for half the fellows in the class, no matter what might be the state of my funds. And finally, as I was coming home late one moonlight night, I was waylaid by a band of the wretches, and made to ride on a broomstick half over the town, the moon shining brightly, every respectable citizen turning to stare me out of countenance, and my tormentors joining in the hoot of derision whenever they got a chance."

"Poor Freshy!" said Bob, laughing heartily at the chapter of grievances. "You've certainly had your full share. Is it possible that your manly spirit can calmly endure so much, and not rise against your oppressors?"

"No, it isn't," said Charley. "Bob, I've laid a plot to avenge myself. As good luck would have it, I brought over from Lakeside Hill one of those man-traps the gardener had in the orchard. You know grandfather wouldn't have them used, and I thought it a pity so much good material should be wasted; so I brought one here, against a rainy day! And to-night, when, I hear, the Sophs have laid a plot to carry me off out of bed, *vi et armis*, I fancy I shall put it to some practical use. It will be an everlasting disgrace to you two fellows if you know of this stratagem and don't stand by me while I execute it. It's needful defence for the safety of one's person, Jimmie!"

And off went the three boys, laughing merrily.

It may be true, as little Lillie said, that the time for appreciating girls is when the boys have all left the parental roof; but most certainly the time when these same boys are appreciated is when they come back from college for their Saturdays at home. What home festivals they are! and how every little bit of work that has been lagging on through the week is hurried up at the last, that all may be in readiness for "the

boys"! Everybody wishes to be at leisure to attend to them, and every one, could wishes effect it, would be at her brightest to receive them.

Lillie Stanley had been watching for her brothers, on the Saturday of which I am writing, for a long time before they appeared; and now, as they turned the corner, she flew down the steps, bareheaded, to welcome them.

"Steady, steady!" exclaimed Bob, as she sprang up to kiss her favorite brother. "Why, Lillie, I didn't know young ladies of your age did such undignified things in the street! Has anything happened to excite you?"

"O, Bobolink, Bobolink,
What do you think?"

said Lillie, dancing before them on the steps. "Fanny's got her name in the papers, and Jack's is coming out in a day or two!"

"Why, Lillie, what are you talking about?" said Jimmie, laughing. "What has Fanny been doing?"

"Go in, and see if it isn't so!" said Lillie. "Fanny is in there herself, and you may ask her."

"What is this extraordinary tale we hear about you, Fanny?" said Bob, catching her as she tried, laughingly, to pass him in the hall. "Lillie says you've actually been getting yourself into the newspapers."

"O, you boys!" said Fanny, laughing and blushing. "There is no use in coming here on Saturday afternoons if one wants any quiet and secrecy."

"Secrecy indeed," said Bob, "when you're actually printed in the paper! Come, Fanny, confess."

"Why, I only came to tell uncle Arthur that I had sent a little story to one of the magazines, and that it had been accepted. There was not much to tell in that, for you might all see it for yourselves in the announcement of the magazine to-night — as Lillie's sharp eyes have done already. But the great piece of news is that Jack has been writing a book about his regiment, and 'Camp Crayons' will come out on Monday. O, I am so happy! Bob, I feel as if that book were my own."

"Fanny can't distinguish between her own good fortune and Jack's," said uncle Arthur, at the

door. "Look at Bob's eyes! He never knew before that Fanny wrote."

"I knew Fanny could do almost anything she tried to," said Bob, heartily; "but I am very much surprised, and as pleased as she is. What started you, Fanny?"

"O, woman's work in general, and Fanny Osborne's vocation in particular," said Fanny, laughing. "But let me go, Bob. It is dinner time. Jack will want me, and Charley will think me partial if I desert him on Saturdays to come to you. Did you leave him alive, Jimmie? He said, last week, that the Sophs were in league against his life. Come, Bob, save your congratulations for another time, and let me say good by."

But Bob followed her down the steps.

"No, Fanny; I haven't said half enough yet. I'm proud of every girl who thinks she has something better to do in life than play. Why, three quarters of the men haven't learned that yet!"

"*Ergo*, none of the women?" said Fanny, smiling. "Well, Bob, dear, I am seriously very happy and thankful for my good fortune, and heartily glad to find a little spot in the world where I can dig too. And then, only think of

Jack! Is it not too good to think that the dear fellow has one power left that can't be taken away?"

"Take care he never loses his right hand, then, Fanny," said Bob, merrily, as they stopped at the Osbornes' door. "I shall have some good news to carry on to New York with me next week."

"Yes; tell Arthur and Lillie for us, and save our blushes," said Fanny, laughingly, as she ran up the steps. "Good by, and a pleasant journey to you, Bob."

CHAPTER VIII.

A LOOK AT LILLIE'S LIFE.

"**W**HEW!" said Bob; and, as he uttered the exclamation, he turned slowly round to take a survey of Arthur's rooms, into which he and his valise had just been ushered.

If the exclamation were one of admiration, it is perhaps no wonder Bob uttered it, for nothing could be more comfortable, luxurious, and even elegant, than the appearance of the room. Not only were the carpet, curtains, and solid articles of furniture handsome, but numerous little trifles attested Arthur's taste; excellent pictures and engravings covered the walls, and every article, by its luxury and perfect keeping, betokened a free indulgence of its owner's refined fancy. Bob walked slowly around, critically surveyed everything in the apartment, and the little dressing-room adjoining it, retreated from Steve Lenox's

half-open door beyond, and finally sat down in Arthur's lounging-chair before the blazing fire.

"Whew!" he said, again. "Arthur must be decidedly 'flush,' judging from the looks of things! A good opening? I should think so! How delightful this would be if Steve Lenox were only out of the concern!"

This being apparently rather an uncomfortable reflection, he got up again to survey the cards which bristled all round the frame of the chimney-glass. Parties, balls, weddings, receptions! A queer smile gathered on Bob's lips as he read.

"So Arthur is in request," he concluded; "and no wonder. He must be grown into a regular swell by this time. Well, since I've arrived before I'm expected, I'll go to the office and look him up."

"Ah! how are you, Stanley?" said Mr. Melville, looking up as Bob entered the little room where he sat in his great arm-chair, wearing the expression that belonged to the chair, namely, a look as if the cares of the nation rested on his shoulders. "How are you? Train got in early — didn't it? Looking for Arthur? You won't find him here at this hour, I assure you. You don't

find our young men down town of an afternoon, nowadays; or many of our old ones either, for that matter. Why don't you go up to my house? Lillie 'll be delighted to see you, if she isn't too busy to look. Good day." And Mr. Melville was straightway plunged in a fit of absorption so deep, that Bob wondered, as he closed the office door, whether he remembered his existence at all. He was mistaken, if he thought not, for Mr. Melville was thinking to himself, at the moment, "What a fine, honest, straightforward face that young Stanley has! Worth two of his brother, I'll warrant."

And thereupon he turned back to his books and papers with redoubled diligence, to make up for the moment's delay, and forgot about Bob, in good earnest.

"Too busy to look!" said Bob to himself, smilingly, as he turned his steps towards Mr. Melville's house. "New York is a busy place, it seems!"

Yet no one could have looked more at leisure than the two figures who occupied the parlor into which he was shown. Lillie Dalton leaned back on the cushions of the sofa, where she sat playing



with the charms of her watch-chain, and listening, with a half-coquettish, half-bored, all-discontented expression, to a young man who leaned against the mantel-piece, talking in a listless, nonchalant fashion that made Bob long to shake some animation into him. This young man was Steve Lenox.

"Ah, Stanley, how are you?" he said, coolly, not altering his tone in the least, or moving a step forward. "I believe Arthur was ex—"

"Why, Bob, how do you do?" exclaimed Lillie, jumping up from the sofa to receive him, and losing all her languor in a moment. "I'm so glad to see you! and how good of you to come so soon!"

She shook hands heartily with Bob, and then turned towards Steve Lenox with the expression one wears when she feels herself confronted with two very inharmonious elements.

"I'm going," said Steve, with a smile as lazy and indifferent as all the rest of his doings and sayings. "Then I am to have my German made endurable, Miss Lillie, and we are agreed that those tablets of yours were all wrong?"

"Unless my memory should prove as bad in

your case as in the other," said Lillie, with a faint blush rising to her cheek, in spite of her half-scornful little laugh and shrug of her pretty shoulders.

"Is there any danger of that?" said Steve, with an affectation of alarm. "Then I shall have to adopt some means of making you remember our engagement. Ah, poor fellow! what will be his feelings when he finds himself thrown over! I'm afraid we shall be responsible for the consequences, Miss Lillie. Good by, then, for the present. We shall meet again soon, I suppose, Stanley."

And, with a careless nod to Bob, Steve left the room. There had always been the same sort of tacit antagonism between Bob and Steve Lenox from the days of their boyhood. On Bob's side, a well-defined dislike, arising from general disapprobation of Steve's ways of thinking, his conduct, principles, and associates, as well as of his pernicious influence over Arthur. On Steve's side, it was the easily explained dislike of one person towards another, who, he knows, sees through and holds him at his true value. This dislike was, with Bob, by no means

diminished through separation from its object. There was something in Steve's easy assurance of manner towards Lillie, which incensed him far more than his rudeness towards himself; and, as he turned to Lillie now, somewhat of this feeling looked out of his tell-tale face. Bob was a person of such sterling honesty, — such true coin throughout, — that any alloy was pretty sure to ring false and hollow in his presence, and all sham and make-believe to betray themselves at once. So Lillie, encountering his clear, frank eyes, was conscious, at once, of the affected coquetry of her manner towards Steve, and blushed as if Bob had accused her of it.

"Do you like him, Lillie?" Bob asked, abruptly.

Lillie shook her head, with another little shrug. "No better than you do."

"Then why do you pretend to?" said blunt Bob. "And why do you break your engagements with other people to dance with him?"

"O," said Lillie, blushing, as she tossed her pretty head, with her old childish perverseness, "Steve Lenox is somebody in society, Bob, and it won't do to show all one's feelings so openly

there. Besides, why should I bore myself with a stupid partner? If I don't happen to approve of Mr. Lenox all through, that is no reason why I should deny that he dances beautifully, and is a very attentive and agreeable German partner."

"And no reason that you should break your word, so far as I can see," said Bob, imperturbably.

"O, well," said Lillie, laughing off his words with her wonted wilfulness, "don't scold me, Bob. Steve Lenox is over and done with — don't let's bother ourselves about him now. I want to hear all about Lakeside Hill, and Sue, and Guy, and that dear little rogue, Robin. How does Jimmie get on in college? And O, isn't Fanny coming out splendidly?"

So Bob and Lillie sat down by the fire in the darkening twilight, and had one of the comfortable, cosy chats that home subjects are sure to suggest; and Lillie, getting rid of all the languor and indifference of her society manner, became her own warm-hearted, amiable little self, as Bob answered her eager questions.

"O," she said, half regretfully, as Bob finished a glowing eulogium on Fanny, her earnest-

ness in making an aim for herself, and an interest for Jack, her talent, and ambition, "it does make me ashamed of being such a mere plaything and doll-baby. I do wish, after all, that I need not lead such an empty, good-for-nothing kind of life."

"And why *need* you, Lillie?" said Bob, in his brusque fashion.

But two serious speeches in succession seemed too much for Lillie.

"O, I don't know; everybody can't do exactly what they choose," was the somewhat vague reply. "Never mind, now — have you seen Arthur yet?"

"Arthur was out when I arrived," said Bob. "I thought I might perhaps find him here."

"He is grown into a very fine young man," said Lillie, shaking her head gravely; "so all the mammas say, Bob. By the way —"

"Ah, Mr. Robert," said Mrs. Melville's voice at the door. "I have been wondering who was Lillie's guest. I know she is overjoyed to see you, and so am I."

Mrs. Melville's tone and manner were not quite so "overjoyed" as her words, and Bob wondered,

as he shook hands, what was the use of saying so much, when, as it seemed, people meant so little. He was quite glad to hear Mr. Melville's hearty voice behind his wife, for, however much the manner of his welcome might suffer by comparison with hers, it had, at least, a genuine sound.

"Ah, here you are again, Stanley! Well, stay to dinner with us; we shall be glad to see more of you — shan't we, Lillie?"

"We should, or I should," said Lillie, "if it were not for the party. I suppose I should see little enough of him if he staid. Heigh-ho!" with a little yawn; "if only one could get dressed by magic!"

"Is your party to-night, Lillie?" said Bob, laughing. "Well, you don't seem very ecstatic at the prospect."

"O, that's all over now," said the young lady, with a very blasée air. "I've done anticipating; but I enjoy it when I get there. Let me see — Arthur will not be there to-night, I suppose, as he will want to see you; but you must go to the next party with him, Bob. I shall meet Mrs. — to-night, and I shall tell her she must send an invitation to Mr. Stanley's brother."

"Thank you; then I shall certainly go," said Bob. "I want to see you in the world, you know. No, thank you, Mr. Melville. I won't stay this evening, I believe. Arthur and I have not met yet. Good night."

But Lillie skipped out into the hall before her uncle, repeating, "Now come every day, Bob. It is so like old times and home —"

"To see you," Lillie was about to say; but at the moment the door was opened, a man, coming up the steps, handed in a magnificent bouquet for Miss Dalton. "With Stephen Lenox's compliments — a gentle reminder," was written on the card accompanying it, and Lillie was too much absorbed in ecstatic exclamations over the rose-buds to remember the end of her sentence to Bob.

"O, well," said Bob, using, unconsciously, Sue's very words, as he walked briskly towards Arthur's rooms, and thought of Lillie by the way. "O, well, a girl must be absorbed, and, perhaps, somewhat unstable, her first season."

"Well, what do you think of my quarters, Bob?" Arthur asked, when the two brothers were settled over the fire for a quiet, cozy chat, this first evening of Bob's visit.

"I should think there could be but one opinion," Bob returned. "Why, Arthur, you're living in clover! Mr. Melville must be like the genie in the 'Arabian Nights,' who comes whenever the magic lamp is rubbed, and brings just what's wanted, from carpets and curtains down to the last new style of bootjack."

"O, I don't know about that," said Arthur, with a light laugh. "The rooms are all Steve's affair. You know he is a sort of Aladdin, and can have just what he wants without the trouble of rubbing the lamp for it."

"But this is not his room," said Bob, taking in the whole apartment with a most comprehensive and expressive glance.

"No; but it wouldn't do to disgrace one's chum, you know," Arthur replied, easily dismissing the subject. "Well, I certainly have no reason to complain of my situation in New York—a pleasant, easy life, not too much to do, and an opportunity of seeing some very delightful society. I am not killed with hard work, and have a good deal of pleasant play; so I have no cause to grumble—have I?"

"Why, no," said Bob, "if a good deal of play,

and not much work, is what you came here for. I suppose one's success in business depends, in a great measure, on the amount of interest that is put into it."

"O, I dare say," said Arthur, laughing, as he lazily lighted his cigar. "But I don't pretend to say, my dear Bob, that I shall ever be a distinguished business man; indeed, I have no ambition to be. I have an excellent opening already made for me in this house, and I am content with that, without making any special exertion of my own. I never said, for a moment, that my tastes lay in business."

"Where do they lie?" said Bob. I don't think he had intended that there should be any bitterness in his words; but Arthur colored a little, as if he felt the reproach. His tone, however, was as pleasant as before, when he replied, —

"Well, if you ask me seriously, I think I would rather be an artist than anything in the world. But where is the use in talking about it? Beggars can't be choosers, and it takes money even to be able to begin to dabble for one's living. I have none. The old thing, you see, Bob — the want of money is the root of all evil."

"Beggars can't be idlers any more than choosers, that I see," said Bob, shortly. "It takes money to be able to *dawdle*, as well as to dabble."

Arthur took out his cigar, and laughed with perfect good-humor.

"I see your drift, Bob," he said, gayly; "but you know we were always different, and I do not yet see the necessity of slaving myself to death, and neglecting all the good things of life that offer. I can imagine you, a few years hence, grinding away at a profession, up at all hours of the night, over sick people in the character of a doctor, or, possibly, working yourself into your grave in some little country pulpit, salary six hundred a year! Which is it to be?"

"I'll tell you before I begin," said Bob, good-naturedly; "I might do worse things than either."

"And you're pretty sure not to do anything that isn't of the best," said Arthur, rising and coming to lean on the back of Bob's chair. "Well, let it go, Bob; we shall each take our own course, I suppose, and no one need complain if we're satisfied. But to start a new subject, what do you think of Lillie in her native element?"

"If you mean the ball-room," said Bob, "I haven't seen her there yet."

"Then you've never seen her at all," said Arthur. "You've no idea, Bob, what a charming little creature she can be. I always thought her pretty at home; but now she's fairly in the world, and has found out her own value there, she is a new person, I assure you. She's the belle of the season, every one says; and how well she knows the fact too, the little flirt! You should see her in her new character."

"I'd rather see her in the old," said Bob. "I doubt if I should like her better."

It was, perhaps, with a view to comparing the new and old Lillie Dalton, that Bob betook himself, in the course of the following morning, to Mrs. Melville's house. It was not far from noon; but he had had time to become very well acquainted with every article of furniture in the parlor before Lillie appeared, looking as if even now her night's rest had been interrupted. Her face brightened, however, at sight of Bob, and she met him with a gay, —

"Well, Bob, how are you this morning? And what do you think of me by daylight? We could scarcely see each other last night. Sue will want to know if I am changed; and what shall you tell her?"

Lillie had received so many compliments from aunt Bella on her improved ease of manner, her increased grace and beauty, that she was hardly prepared for Bob's blunt "I shall tell her I don't think New York air so good for you as Boston. Why, Lillie, I never saw you before with pale cheeks!"

"Are they really pale?" said Lillie, running to the glass to look. "O, that's only because I'm hardly awake yet. What wonder my cheeks are pale, when I've been up all night long, and dancing every evening this week?"

"What did you do it for, then?" said Bob, laughing. "You speak as if there were some great merit in it, Lillie."

"Not at all," said Lillie, a little piqued. "I have a nice enough time to make up for a good many mornings of tired feet and pale cheeks. Ah, I shall have a chance to give you a little peep of our gay parties before you go back, Mr. Bob, and then you won't wonder that I want to go every night."

"Yes, I shall," said Bob, good-naturedly. "But come, Lillie, I'll cure your pale cheeks for you. Put on your things, and take a good brisk walk

with me. It's just the day for it, and there's no better thing in the world for getting rid of the effects of a party."

"O, I can't," said Lillie. "It's too cold; and I'm too tired. Why, I never walk nowadays, Bob!"

"Then you'd better begin on the spot," said Bob; and as he pooh-poohed all her objections, answering each fresh excuse with some excellent reason, and the merry look in his dark eyes that Lillie remembered so well, she gave at last a somewhat reluctant consent.

"But you must stay to luncheon first," she added; "and it is not time for that yet."

"Then sit down and play to me while we're waiting," said Bob; "and it will seem more like old times than even the walk."

"O, I can't play nowadays," said Lillie; "I'm all out of practice. I've no time to look at a note."

"Nonsense!" said Bob. "Time? What else have you to do, pray? I thought you knew me too well to make company excuses to me, Lillie."

He opened the piano, and nodded to her so resolutely, that she found herself sitting on the

music-stool without knowing how, and only offering the faint protest, "Well, if you will have it, you mustn't mind poor playing."

However, when she had once begun, she was so well pleased with her success that she played on till the luncheon bell rang.

"Well," said Bob, "I thought you had forgotten how to play!"

"So I thought I had," returned Lillie, with a bright face. "But you always do manage to make me do just what you choose, Bob; yet it's true, all the same, that I don't play so well as I used."

"Yes, it's true," said Bob, simply; "but it's only because you haven't cared to take the trouble."

There was something so absolutely novel to Lillie, nowadays, in the perfect honesty with which Bob gave frank, straightforward answers where other young men would have poured out compliments, that I am not sure she was not pleased even when her vanity might be supposed to suffer. At all events, she was very sunny all through lunch, despite Bob's candid admission; and the pair set out on their walk in high spirits.

"Do be careful, my love," Mrs. Melville had

said, disapprovingly, when Lillie spoke of her project. "You are very tired already."

"But this is a *new kind* of tired," said Lillie, "and there is nothing but the opera to-night. Besides, it will be so like old times!"

Mrs. Melville was not fond of "old times," but Bob and Lillie were, and there were not two brighter faces in all New York than the two set in the direction of the Park this fine winter morning. The air was clear and frosty, the dry, sparkling snow still lay, pure and white, on the house-roofs, the sky was as blue as on a June day, and the roses bloomed on Lillie's cheeks before they had gone three squares.

"Why!" said she, almost giving a little skip as they crossed the street, "has it been as lovely as this all winter without my knowing anything about it? Why haven't I been out to walk every morning?"

"Because you've been doing something else," said Bob. "The same reason that you haven't been practising. One can't do two things at once — can they?"

Lillie made no rejoinder at the time, but after they had reached the Park, and were looking at

the gay, animated picture of the frozen lake, covered with swiftly-gliding skaters, she suddenly said, —

"But, Bob, how can I do two things at once? You said, yourself, nobody could. Then why should I be blamed if I don't practise or walk when I'm doing something else?"

"What is the something?" Bob said.

"Going to parties," said Lillie. "Now, don't you laugh at me, Bob! You don't know how much time it takes. Why, my head is so full of it all the time, — then there are so many people to see, and such a whirl from morning till night, that the day is gone before I know it."

"It never pays to live in a hurry," said Bob, laconically.

"Come," said Lillie, looking up in his face coaxingly, "you know that isn't a satisfactory answer, Bob. Now tell me, how can I help neglecting some things when I have so many others to do? There can't be time for *everything*, you know."

"Everybody has all the time there is," said Bob.

"O, dear me! do talk a little more, Bob! Why, I tell you I want your advice, and you will only speak three words at a time!"

"What do you want advice about, Lillie?" said Bob, turning towards her.

"Well, a great many things. I may as well speak to you, since Guy isn't here. I'm not always perfectly satisfied, though I *am* enjoying so much, and though I do so dearly love all the pleasure I'm having. When I hear of any other girl, who is doing something in the world, — like Fanny Osborne, for instance, — why, I feel as if I were a most contemptible little creature, and as if my life were the merest good-for-nothing thing. Yet what can I do? — I've no time for anything else."

"I believe, Lillie," said Bob, looking at her with a sudden, quick flash in his dark eyes, "that every one has his work to do in the world, and there's time for it all, if one only cares to find it."

Lillie gave a very disconsolate sigh.

"I can't write," she said, dejectedly. "It isn't in me to do any great thing; but I do believe — and I heartily wish sometimes that I had the resolution for it — that I could be a great deal more than I am now. But what's the use of thinking about it? The first time any pleasant thing

comes to put it out of my head, away go all my good resolutions, and I'm just the little whirligig I was before !”

“But surely, Lillie,” said Bob, hesitating a little, “if one isn't satisfied with one's self, and sees just what is needed, it is easy enough to change. If parties upset you, and you know it, isn't it possible to give up a few of them? You surely wouldn't wish them to be your work in life; and if they prevent you from doing anything else—”

“O, you don't understand me yet,” said Lillie, shaking her head vehemently. “I am such a dreadfully discouraging person to have anything to do with, Bob! Why, I can no more help doing things that I don't approve of, than I can fly! It is all well enough for me to talk, in quiet morning walks, about giving up parties; but when I get there, I feel as if I wanted nothing else except to go on dancing. It is all very well to resolve at home that I will always say just what I mean, and never try to make people believe I like them better than I do, when I know that, the very next chance I get, I shall be trying to make them care about me, and liking it if I succeed.”

"You give yourself a very bad character, Lillie," said Bob, his eyes twinkling merrily, as they met hers.

"It's all true — every word," said Lillie, dejectedly. "I am just so weak."

"It is something, at least, to know it," said Bob, kindly.

The pair walked on in silence for a moment, and then Lillie looked up, with the tears actually standing in her blue eyes. "I suppose you think me a little fool, Bob, to say all this to you. Never mind. I've done it, and I'm not sorry. Whatever you may think about me, I do care about being of some good, only I don't have any one here to mind whether I am or not. You don't know how I wish sometimes for Sue and Guy; but since I can't have them, would you mind — we *are* a sort of cousins, you know — would you mind, while you stay here, just giving my resolutions a *little jog* sometimes, when you think they need it?"

What a strange little creature Lillie was, and what an inconsistent little mixture of good intentions and faulty execution! As she looked up at him with her smiling lips and tearful eyes, Bob

was conscious of a sudden rush of color mounting to his cheeks and brow.

"I'll try," was all he said; but that meant a good deal with Bob Stanley, and the two words were a pretty sure warrant for the fulfilment of this second compact between Lillie and himself.

"What can you see in that young man to like so much, Lillie?" Mrs. Melville asked, discontentedly, after they came home from the opera that night — Lillie in high spirits. "He is nothing to compare to Arthur; yet I have never seen you half so anxious to please *him*!"

"I like to please people who are hard to please," was all Lillie would reply.

CHAPTER IX.

"TOO MANY COOKS SPOIL THE BROTH."

ENJOYABLE as Bob's visit certainly was, it was not without some drawbacks; and foremost among these was the secret uneasiness on his brother's account, which increased the more he saw of Arthur's life and associates. "An easy time of it," and the pursuit of pleasure, as the avowed ambitions of a young man out in the world, are not the most hopeful auguries for his future; nor was the club-room, as a resort, with Steve Lenox and his set for daily companions, the surest prophecy for Arthur's welfare, considering the ease with which he always drifted into temptation. But the time was certainly past now when Bob could utter his word of protest. Arthur was his own master, and it was surely not for his brother to be his judge. So he could only hold his peace, keep his uneasiness to him-

self, and hope that Arthur's easy nature, which seemed to glide so lightly over the deeper waters of life, would pass as smoothly through the dangerous straits he always seemed to be nearing.

Bob had still, at least, his old pride in Arthur's personal superiority, and quite gloried in the popularity his brother had acquired in New York circles.

"It is quite a pleasure to appear in society in company with such 'swells,' as Geoffrey would say," he remarked laughingly to Arthur and Lillie. "I feel as if it shed quite a halo over myself."

And Lillie laughed, and told him he should be known to the world, on his first appearance, as Miss Dalton's German partner.

It was the first time Bob had seen Lillie in what Arthur called the "full zenith of her powers;" and as his pleasure in the crowded ball-room, where he was almost a stranger, was chiefly in watching her, he followed her closely with his eyes. It was impossible not to acknowledge that the little lady had been right in her candid avowal of her faults in society, during that walk in the Park. Bob smiled as he saw how Lillie distributed her

sweet looks, now to this one, now to that, as if each in turn had acquired the very foremost place in her regard : half an hour after, these same people could scarcely obtain a glance. It was amusing, too, to see the conscious look of triumph in Miss Lillie's face, as she held her small court in the German, and received the offerings of flowers and favors which her subjects brought her. I think she was secretly pleased that Bob should witness this triumph, and was possibly anxious (as naughty children are said to be) to "show off" in his presence. At any rate, she made herself so particularly charming, that she was scarcely allowed a moment to rest between the waltzes ; and her empty chair was almost all her German partner saw of her. Finding it somewhat slow work, as his acquaintance among the ladies was limited, and his taste for manifold introductions but small, Bob was fain to amuse himself with watching the various groups who passed and repassed his seat in their promenades up and down the wide, cool hall. Occasionally, too, snatches of conversation reached his ears.

"Do you know Mr. Arthur Stanley?" asked a certain gauzy-robed young lady, who had several

times passed the open doorway behind Bob's chair. "He seems quite a favorite in society this winter, though I never met him in New York before."

"Boston fellow," said her attendant cavalier, somewhat laconically. (Young men in society are said not to enjoy each other's praises when uttered by their fair partners.)

"Then you do not know him? He is handsome, I think, and is said to be very intimate with Mr. Lenox. Is Mr. Stanley another millionaire, like his friend?"

"One might think so," said her partner, with a shrug. "The two seem to be cut out on one pattern, and Stanley ought to have a pretty long purse, judging from the way he lives. But that's no test; these rich mortals, Miss ——, like Lenox, have a way of making all their friends do as they do, whether they can afford it or not. Stanley may be as poor as a church mouse, for aught I know — sorry I can't satisfy your curiosity more fully."

The pair passed out of hearing, and Bob did not feel much enlivened by what he had heard. Anxiety about Arthur was certainly not a feeling

he need come to parties to have increased: so he turned his attention to another group of talkers, in the hope of hearing something more pleasant. This time the voices belonged to a knot of young men, who leaned against the doorway, chatting, and Lillie Dalton seemed the subject of discussion.

"I never saw Miss Dalton look prettier than she does to-night," said one. "What an atrocious little flirt she is, though! I would give something to know who would be the lucky man at the end of the season."

"Not much doubt, I should say," returned another. "She won't look twice at anybody else if Steve Lenox is in the room. I've heard several times already, that it is a settled thing; so you may make up your mind to it, Tom."

"Pooh," said No. 3. "That's mere talk. You may be pretty sure Steve Lenox has no idea of fastening himself down yet; don't crush all Tom's hopes, Dick."

"I haven't entered the lists yet," said the first speaker, laughing; "too many competitors. Well, I only hope Miss Dalton is as sure about Lenox's

intentions as you seem to be, Harry. I hardly think she'd waste so many of her smiles on his flinty heart, if she were. You may be sure Mrs. Melville knows what she's about, and, unless I'm very much mistaken — ”

“ Unless *I'm* very much mistaken, she will whistle for her bird,” said the young man, whom his companions called Harry. “ As for Miss Dalton's smiles, she is pretty impartial with them ; it's ‘ share and share alike.’ I'm not so sure I should want Lenox if I were in her place. There's a pretty long score to set against his thousands.”

“ What do you say to Arthur Stanley, now we're on the subject?” said Dick. “ There's a match for you ! Very suitable, as the old ladies say. Stanley's with Mr. Melville, you know, and Miss Dalton's got a pretty little sum of her own that would just feather his nest — ”

“ Humph ! I'd rather have Lenox's dollars than Stanley's good looks,” said Harry. “ They're about in one boat, for aught I can see, except for that difference. But I fancy Stanley has had your idea himself.”

And off sauntered the young men, leaving Bob even less comfortable than before.

"O, what music!" exclaimed Lillie, dropping into her chair at last, with a rapturous sigh. "Bob, is it not a charming party? What! haven't you enjoyed it? Dear me! I'm afraid I haven't been an entertaining partner. I ought to have refused to dance so much."

"Indeed, I'm glad you didn't, Lillie," said Bob. "You know I don't care very much for parties, under any circumstances, and I certainly did not come to-night to spoil your pleasure."

Nevertheless, Lillie continued to feel remorseful, and wondered, to the last minute, why Bob had worn such a grave, troubled look.

I do not want any of my readers to fancy that Bob was perfect. I certainly do not intend to make him so, whatever good points he may have, and however strong a hold on my affections his character may have won for him. On the contrary, that hot temper of his still remained, however well under control it might be; all his passions were quick, and easily roused, and sometimes his strong feelings became strong prejudices. His feeling against Steve Lenox was a case in point. Well-grounded as his aversion to him certainly was, nobody is entirely defec-

tive, any more than entirely perfect. Yet it was hard for Bob to allow him one good point. What he had overheard from the talk of Tom, Dick, and Harry, of Steve's unmeaning devotion to Lillie, made him very indignant, and he was quite ready to accept the report as truth, and cause for righteous wrath, without pausing to weigh it well in the balance. Then, again, Arthur — could it be, as the young men had said, that he was planning to obtain Lillie's money for himself, under pretence of winning her love? As Bob asked himself the question, the first pang of bitter, rankling envy he had ever cherished against his brother darted through his mind.

Do not fancy that there was any nonsense between Bob and Lillie. They had grown up together, boy and girl, with a hearty feeling of friendship for each other, and with none of the unhealthy, sentimental chatter about love-making which is such a mockery of the pure, beautiful sentiment of love, to disturb their relation. But this feeling of warm friendship will often change to something warmer, if there is any firm foundation in it, and on Bob's side there was a genuine interest in Lillie that could bear with her

caprices, and patiently wait for the good beneath to come out from the surface froth of vanity and frivolity. On Lillie's side there was the hearty respect and regard for Bob which made her value his opinion above that of most people. So we see that this mutual feeling *might* some day grow still stronger, and Bob's little pang of jealousy was a warning prick.

It was only a momentary pang, however, for jealousy was far too mean a passion for Bob's generous nature to harbor against any one, least of all his brother. The thought about Arthur was gone as quickly as it came; Bob would not give it place; but the feeling against Steve Lenox still remained, and it was so well grounded that he thought it might safely be harbored.

It is a dangerous thing, always, for young people to try to play the part of adviser and judge towards each other. There are few young heads sufficiently mature, and few young hearts sufficiently under control, to do without the wisdom of experience which years must bring to every one in a greater or less degree. Lillie, we know, had asked Bob to be her adviser and helper — to tell her of her faults if he saw them,

and point out the way to cure them if he could. Bob, without any overweening conceit, really thought he could do this; but he must first have put out of his heart that feeling against Steve Lenox, if he were to become an impartial judge.

So far the new plan had worked admirably, and Bob and Lillie only seemed to have drawn closer together for their new relation. Bob had such a good-natured, whimsical way of criticising Lillie, and Lillie took the criticism from him in such good part, that they were better friends than ever. But, dear me! how hard it is to know just how to stop on the safe side, and how very few people can help going just a step beyond the boundary line!

"I can't go to walk to-morrow morning, Bob," said Lillie, one day. Those brisk constitutionals were become a regular thing now.

"It will be almost our last chance," said Bob. "I go home the next day, you know. Is it anything very important, Lillie?"

"O, no," said Lillie, carelessly. "Only Mr. Lenox has asked me to go out to drive with him in his new sleigh, and we shan't have this snow much longer. It seems a pity to lose a day."

Bob was silent for a minute, and sat playing with the tassel of the sofa-cushion, as if he did not quite know how to begin.

"Lillie," said he at last, "you told me you wished me to speak to you about yourself whenever I thought there was reason. Were you in earnest?"

"Of course I was," said Lillie. "What have I been doing now, Bob?"

She looked up with a pretty little air of surprise, but Bob's eyes were bent on the carpet.

"Lillie," said he, hesitating a little, "you dislike Steve Lenox, and you have often said you disapprove of him—have you not?"

"Yes," said Lillie; "but what of that? I'm not talking of him; I'm talking of his sleigh. I mayn't like his principles, but I may like to dance and drive with him—mayn't I?"

"I think," said Bob, "that when one dislikes a person on good grounds,—honestly disapproves of him and his principles,—it is better not to give any one reason to think otherwise. If I were a girl in society, Lillie, I should think it my duty not to seem to countenance any one of whom I really disapproved."

"O, dear me, Bob!" said Lillie, with a little toss of her head; "but you don't expect me to reform society — do you? I don't say I like Mr. Lenox, but I don't see why I should —"

"And I don't see," said Bob, "why you should make him or any one else suppose you do like him."

"How can I help what people think?" Lillie returned. "But there! I may just as well be honest, and confess that I do like to have Mr. Lenox pay me attention, because he is so much thought of; and I do like to encourage him — well, because it's my nature to, I suppose! I know he doesn't mean anything, and he knows I don't; so what is the harm? But," beginning to hesitate, "perhaps you mean I am giving other people reason to think what isn't true. Well, perhaps you're right — and possibly —"

"I'd better give up the drive," Lillie was about to say. She was easily influenced by people whose opinion she really valued, and Bob was one of these. What a pity he did not let her finish the sentence! But no; in his eagerness he forgot his wisdom, and interrupted with, —

"Yes, indeed, Lillie, other people are very

much to be considered in such matters. They are ready enough to say now that Steve Lenox is amusing himself with you, and that you think him in earnest."

What an unlucky speech that was! It was not what Bob had meant to say, either; but his hasty tongue spoke the words almost without his will, and when they were said, there was no recalling them. He stopped, coloring, and Lillie exclaimed, —

"Well, Bob, I'm sure I'm much obliged to you for telling me what people say of me! I don't consider it any of their business what I do, and I shall go out to drive with Mr. Lenox if only to show them how little I care for their gossip."

"I beg your pardon, Lillie," said Bob, heartily. "I didn't mean to say what I did. I am sure you care if people think you encourage where you disapprove."

But Lillie would not meet Bob's bright face and outstretched hand. She turned away her head, and answered, coldly, —

"I don't consider a sleigh-ride any encouragement of bad principles; besides, talking of that, is Mr. Lenox worse than any one else? I am

sure he and Arthur belong to the same set, and go everywhere together. I suppose they are both called 'fast;' but you are quite willing I should speak to Arthur!"

Bob's cheek flushed somewhat hotly, though I hardly think it was from anger. "I hope you don't consider them quite on a par, Lillie," was all he said; but Lillie knew, from his tone, that she had wounded him in a tender place. So the young people were not quite so merry and friendly as their wont this evening, and the conversation during dinner was chiefly maintained by Mr. Melville and Bob. The former had taken quite a fancy to the young man's frank face and straightforward manner; and now, as they rose from table, he said, with a hearty slap on Bob's shoulder, —

"Come, I'm sorry New York is to lose you so soon. Let me see — you're almost through college — aren't you? What are you going to do with yourself? If you have a turn for business, I wouldn't mind giving you an opening myself."

"Thank you, sir;" said Bob; "I am thinking of a profession."

"Ah! Lawyer, doctor, or parson?"

"I am not quite ready to talk of my plans as settled yet, sir," Bob returned, in his reserved fashion; and there the matter dropped.

But Lillie — the sly little puss — had heard what Bob said, and treasured up the words as a hint for reconciliation. She was secretly sorry, both for her speech about Arthur and for her perversity about the drive, and only wanted a chance to "make up." Accordingly, when Bob was putting on his coat, in the hall, she slipped out, and, while Mr. Melville was pacing the floor, talking loudly, his hands behind him, and his back turned to the young people, Lillie whispered, softly, as they shook hands, "I'm sorry I said that, Bob. Ah! I know what the 'profession' is going to be, and I'm sure I'm quite willing to take a little sermon now and then, if the new minister is to be the least bit like uncle Arthur. I think you were right too about the ride. Good night."

And Bob's hearty grip of Lillie's hand amply expressed both his asked and granted pardon. He walked briskly away through the moonlit streets, and Lillie tripped back to the parlor, both feeling happy in the thought that the

disputed matter was so easily and amicably settled.

But alas! why will that homely proverb, "Too many cooks spoil the broth," come up so constantly in every-day life? As they went up stairs, Mrs. Melville said, glancing from the window at the bright moon and dazzling stars, "You will have a beautiful morning for your sleigh-ride with Mr. Lenox, Lillie."

"Yes, it is going to be a bright day," said Lillie, absently. Then, after a moment, she added, "But I don't think I shall go to ride, after all, aunt Bella."

"Not go!" said Mrs. Melville, with a very decided exclamation mark in her voice; "not go, Lillie! Why, my love, have you a cold?"

"O, no," said Lillie, half laughing; "but I don't think I had better do it. You know I don't like Mr. Lenox very much, and I dare say people talk about our being seen together in company, and I don't care to give them any reason for it."

"I never heard anything so ridiculous in my life," said Mrs. Melville, with great asperity. "Who has been talking to you, Lillie? I sup-

pose it was that impertinent Mr. Robert Stanley—it was he who had heard ‘people talk,’ Lillie?”

“Yes, Bob spoke to me about it,” said Lillie, bravely, “and I agree with him, aunt Bella, in thinking it best not to encourage people for whom you have really no liking or respect. So, if I don’t go, it will not be because Bob advised me, but because I choose to take his advice.”

“*Bob*, indeed!” said Mrs. Melville, much vexed. “I really don’t know what to think of you, Lillie. What possible business is it of *Bob’s* what you do? I beg I may not hear another word of such nonsense from you. I am really mortified by your conduct!”

And away walked Mrs. Melville, in high dudgeon, leaving poor Lillie to go to bed in a very disturbed frame of mind.

The morning, however, seemed to have settled her difficulties for her, for gray clouds and drizzling mist belied the promise of the beautiful night, and Lillie, much relieved at this escape from a dilemma, settled herself for a cheerful “rainy day.” She looked for Bob to come and have a good-by chat, at least, since their walk

must be postponed ; but he did not appear. And alas ! as the morning advanced, the gray clouds seemed to be growing thinner, the drizzling rain stopped. Then from a break in the pale sky peeped the sun ; presently appeared the blue sky, the pallid sunshine grew golden and bright, and lo ! the rainy day had turned into a pleasant one !

"Well," said Lillie to herself, "it is past time for our drive now, and it would be ridiculous to write a note, when I don't even know that Mr. Lenox means to go. I don't believe there is any danger of his coming for me."

Misplaced confidence ! When Lillie went down to lunch, there was Steve Lenox.

"Good morning, Miss Lillie," said he ; "our drive is only postponed for a few hours, you see. The snow is too deep to have suffered much from the little rain we have had this morning, and my horses are in fine trim. We couldn't have a better afternoon."

Lillie glanced at her aunt. "You have no engagement for the afternoon, my love," said that lady, resolutely. "Is there any reason why you should not go with Mr. Lenox?"

No, Lillie could give none. She was ashamed

to say she thought Bob might come to say good by, and how could she explain to Mr. Lenox, with the horses actually at the door, and the charioteer hat in hand, that she had changed her mind, and decided not to accompany him? No, she was fairly caught, and there was no loophole of escape for her. She went up stairs to put on her things with a reluctance most unflattering to Steve Lenox.

"But I can explain just how it was to Bob, when I see him," she said to herself. "And I do not believe he will come when I am away, as he does not leave New York before the morning."

The horses were swift, the sleigh softly cushioned, the snow just in sleighing order, and Steve the perfection of a driver. But there was little enjoyment for Lillie in the drive. She seemed to dislike Steve more than ever, his smooth compliments, that meant nothing, his cool assurance, his lazy, indifferent manner, and worn-out smile. She was even impatient, and Steve secretly wondered why the little belle was so out of sorts. The truth was, it all seemed to Lillie very hollow and make-believe, and, as she said to

herself, "*the corners of her mouth actually ached*, with pretending to smile!"

The first object that met her eyes, as she entered the house on her return, was a card lying on the hall table, its end ominously turned up, and a scribbled "*P. P. C.*" in the corner.

"When was Mr. Stanley here?" she asked the servant.

"Just after you went, miss. There was no one at home, and I told him you was gone to drive with Mr. Lenox. He said I was to tell the ladies he was obliged to leave by the afternoon train, and was sorry not to see them to say good by."

So he was gone, and Lillie had no chance to explain herself! "What a mean little double-faced hypocrite he must think me!" she said to herself; and, turning, she hurried into the parlor, threw herself on the sofa, and indulged, for once, in a good, hearty fit of crying.

Feeling somewhat refreshed by this outburst, she rose, and, taking her writing-desk, began a hurried little note, writing as fast as if the words could reach Bob the sooner for the speed with which they were written: —

DEAR BOB: Don't think me a little humbug, as I know you are tempted to. I don't deserve it, really! I didn't intend to go to drive this afternoon, but I was fairly caught, and had no excuse. If I had dreamed that it would clear off, I would have written a note to Mr. Lenox. Now you will believe me — won't you? I know I am a very good-for-nothing little creature, but I do try to be worth something, and I am pretty ready to take good advice — am I not? I can't bear that you should go off thinking me a hypocrite, for I know you would despise me thoroughly if you thought me that, and I do want your good opinion, Bob. —

Lillie looked up for a minute, as she wrote these words, as she might have looked at Bob, had he been standing there in person, a pleading expression in her face, and two great tear-drops still hanging on her eyelashes. Mrs. Melville was standing by the sofa.

"Why, Lillie Dalton," said that lady, "what is the matter? You have been crying till your eyes are as red as possible, and you won't be fit to be seen this evening."

"I'm sure I don't care if I'm not," said Lillie. "I shall be heartily glad to stay at home. O, aunt Bella, Bob has been to say good by, and never left a message for me. So he believes I meant to go to drive, all the time, when I as good as promised I wouldn't! O, aunt Bella, you should have helped me say I couldn't."

"And suppose Bob *has* been here?" said Mrs. Melville, coolly. "Is it any one's concern, or does any one care what he thinks of you?"

"I care a great deal," said Lillie, vehemently. "I can't bear to have Bob despise me. I care more to have him think well of me than almost any one else. Why, aunt Bella, I respect him with all my heart, and I love him dearly."

"Lillie," said Mrs. Melville, in measured tones, "you really astonish me. I am positively mortified that a niece of mine should express herself so strongly. It might do if you and Mr. Robert Stanley were children; but for a girl of eighteen to speak so of a young man of twenty — I call it positively unwomanly!"

Lillie sat up and looked at her aunt for a moment in silence.

"Why, aunt Bella," she said, "what do you

mean? You know that Bob is almost like my brother, and there is no harm in what I say about him, unless *you put it in!*"

"And I suppose," said Mrs. Melville, glancing at the note, and speaking in the same cool, sarcastic tone, "you are writing to the young man you 'love so dearly' to explain your naughtiness, and beg his forgiveness. O, Lillie, Lillie!"

Mrs. Melville was turning away with a little laugh, deeming, perhaps, that she had said enough. It had been too much, alas! for poor Lillie.

She started up from the sofa, her face all on fire.

"Aunt Bella," she said, "you are absolutely cruel. You know I am doing nothing wrong, and I have nothing to be ashamed of. But there! I won't talk about it — you shan't say such things of me — there goes my note!"

She thrust the paper between the bars of the grate, turned, and rushing past her astonished aunt, flew up to her room, with a choking in her throat, which became a sob as soon as the door was safely locked.

So that officious and superfluous "third per-

son" had stepped in to disturb a very satisfactory relation, and cause much misunderstanding between two friends; and there was a considerable amount of heart-burning that night, both in a New York ball-room and in the passenger train for Boston!

CHAPTER X.

MORE BIRDS OF PASSAGE.

MY readers have been sharing Lillie's gayeties in New York for so long, that I am afraid they will find it dull and quiet to come back to Boston, and settle down in this little room in the fourth story of Mr. John Osborne's house. This room has been, since Fanny's childhood, her private and particular haunt: here, in old days, she secreted her pet dolls against the mutilations of her mischievous brothers; and here, in later days, she has kept her precious papers, and reared her air-castles till they reached the skies. It is quiet, certainly. Fanny is at her desk, and Jack, a privileged intruder, sitting by the fire: not a sound is to be heard, yet nothing could be more bright than the faces of brother and sister. Evidently they do not suffer from *ennui*, and, therefore, I hope that you may not.

I doubt if there were in all Boston a happier girl than Fanny Osborne had been since, as she said, "she set up for herself in the literary business." She put her whole heart and soul into her work, — as, indeed, she did into everything that she undertook, — and her happy face shone like a sunbeam all day long. She was very successful, — a rare experience for young authors, — and her quick wits and nimble pen found a ready market. But if disappointment had come, instead of success, I am sure her brave spirit would not have been daunted; she would have kept on in her purpose none the less steadily because there were some defeats at the outset. It was not only for herself, either, that she wrote. Her pen was always at Jack's service, and she was ready at a word to spare his tired left hand, and write at his dictation as cheerily as if the thoughts were her own.

Of late, however, her services had been called into requisition less and less frequently. Jack's first book had not been followed by anything more as yet, and his new material seemed to be used but slowly. Fanny would often say nowadays, —

"Jack, shan't I write for you? You will really lose the thread of your fancies if you leave it ravelling so long."

"No, thank you, Fanny," Jack would answer. "I'll leave the thread alone for to-day, and watch you spinning your yarns."

He was watching her now, as she wrote, with a smile half sad, half tender on his face — looking at her so fixedly that she became aware, at last, of the earnest scrutiny, and raised her head.

"Why, Jack!" she exclaimed, at sight of his grave face. "What is the matter? You look so sober! Are you sad, or lonely, dear?"

"Not a bit of it," said Jack, smiling his brightest smile. "I was only meditating. But suppose you stop for a few minutes, and come and have a chat with me — unless, indeed, Rosalinda is in too precarious a situation to be left."

"Pshaw!" said Fanny, laughing, and dropping her pen on the instant. "If there were any 'Rosalinda' in the case, I should like to see the 'precarious situation' that would hinder me from coming to talk with you."

She sat down on the arm of his chair, and rested her hand on his shoulder.

"So you are happy, Fan?" Jack began.

"Am I not? O, Jack, I do feel as if I had found my vocation! I think, if I can only go on writing, that I shall be just so happy all my life. The only trouble is, that it is too absorbing. I feel sometimes as if I were growing to care less for people than I used — just as I began by caring less for parties and pleasures because there was something I could make into a pleasure for myself. I am sometimes afraid I may grow narrow and selfish."

"Never fear, Fanny. People who have such wide sympathies as you need not be afraid of growing narrow. And as for selfishness, you will never have the chance for that while you have me to make demands on you."

"You, Jack? Why, you never want me to do anything for you nowadays. I often wish you would ask more, if only for my sake."

"Really, Fanny? Would you really like me to ask more of you — some great sacrifice, say?"

Jack looked at her so earnestly that Fanny began to be almost afraid of what he was going to say. His tone, and his grave expression of a few minutes before, made her fancy there was something serious in his mind.

"O, Jack, what are you going to say? What is the matter?"

"Nothing, goosey!" said Jack, with a caressing pat on the shoulder. "Nothing to be afraid of. I was only going to ask what would induce you to lay aside your scribbling for six months — or say even twelve?"

"Very few things," said Fanny, "if they were offered me as an exchange for doing that — as a pleasure to myself, I mean. But a word from you, if it were only just to gratify a whim of yours. Do you mean that you would like me to give it up? Am I growing poky, and stupid, and one-sided over my desk? If I am, say the word, and I'll lock it up this minute."

"Pooh!" said Jack, looking at her with an expression that belied his words. "You know very well that there is no danger of my saying that, Fan. But it is true that I am going to ask something of you that I am afraid you will think a sacrifice. Could you make up your mind, do you think, to go to Europe with me?"

"Could I?" echoed Fanny. "Is that what you call a sacrifice? O, you naughty boy! how could you frighten me so? But," as she met his eye,

"you are still grave, Jack. O, don't say you are worse — don't say you are going because — O, Jack!"

She held his hand tightly in hers — it seemed as if the words would not come.

"No, Fanny," said Jack, "I am not going to say anything that will alarm you. Why, I did not think Europe such a dreadful thing!"

"It is not Europe, of course, Jack," said Fanny, trying to laugh; "but when you spoke, I half fancied, for a moment, you were going to say something more. But it wasn't so — was it? You only mean you are a little tired of home, and think we should be the fresher for seeing a little of the world?"

She looked at him as pleadingly as if his saying the words were all that was needed. Jack put his hand on the hand that was laid so beseechingly on his shoulder.

"I would say anything in the world for you, Fanny," he said, affectionately; "anything in the world I could. But you are a brave girl, able to know the truth, and face the worst; you would not thank me for trying to deceive you. It is true, Fan, that I want to go to Europe for some-

thing more than a mere pleasure trip; it is true that I want to try it as a medicine."

Fanny mutely raised her eyes and looked at him imploringly.

"My dear girl," said Jack, smiling, "have I said anything to cause such a despairing expression as that? I only mean that the little there is left of me has been aching more than its fair share lately, and I should like to try some pleasant kind of medicine."

"That is the reason you have given up your writing," said Fanny. "That is the reason you have been so quiet and sober. O, my Jack! don't say you are going to leave me now!" She put her arms round his neck, and her tears fell fast on his shoulder.

"I don't say anything of the kind," said Jack, brightly. "Come, Fanny, keep up good courage. You know, dear, it is not for me to say or unsay — it will all be ordered for me. But come, Fanny, you know we two have agreed never to say die; so don't you give me the rheumatism by pouring such a flood of warm water on my shoulder, but consider that I've made you a pleasant offer of a trip to Europe!

Now tell me, will you give up that beloved scribbling for a little, and be a traveller's companion?"

"I'll be anything in the world, Jack," said Fanny, lifting her head, and speaking energetically, "if you will only stay with me! Or no — if you will only promise that you will tell me if you think there is any danger that you cannot stay."

"That I can do," said Jack, "and I promise you I will. So come, Fanny, *smile up*, as our Jimmie used to say, and go back to Rosalinda and the writing-desk."

Fanny smiled as brightly as she could; but the little desk was quietly closed, and the busy pen lay idle. Reality, not romance, was weighing heavy on Fanny's heart to-day.

So two more people were to sail out on the wide world of waters, and there was to be a new gap in the home circle.

"There won't be one of the family left," lamented old Prissy. "We shall all mope and pine to death without you, Miss Fanny. I can't bear to think of *you* marrying and settling down in foreign parts."

"Who told you I meant to, Prissy?" said Fanny, laughingly. "It's the first *I've* heard of it."

"O, I know how it is," Prissy returned, with a sage shake of the head. "When girls go off nowadays, we all know what will come of it; there's no getting them back again. We shall hear of some French count or German baron making love to you, Miss Fanny, and there's the last we shall see of you! That's the way with all girls."

"Nonsense, Prissy. You know I'm never going to marry."

"O, don't you suppose I know what that means?" said Prissy, with her shrewd little laugh. "I've heard girls say that before, and I've had a chance to remind them of it, too, on their wedding-day!"

"Well, at any rate, I shall come home again," said Fanny. "Do you think Jack would desert his country at this late day, pray?"

But Prissy, still unconvinced, still sadly shook her head over the house deserted by all its young inmates. It seemed, indeed, as if the ranks were daily thinning.

"Till I see you again, Fanny," was Arthur's farewell, as he shook hands with the pair on board the steamer in New York, "I really feel as if I should meet you next in London or Paris."

"Why, are you thinking of following us?" Fanny asked, surprised.

"No, not especially," said Arthur, lightly; "but it's by no means an impossibility. There's no knowing where I may turn up next. Good by, Jack; come home a Hercules!"

As it happened, Arthur's "possibility" became a certainty very soon; but to tell how it happened, I must go back to home matters.

For the first few weeks after Bob's return, his New York visit was much in his mind. It was undeniable that he had been disappointed in Lillie. They had been so drawn together in the old days of Guy's imprisonment, that the friendship then formed had rested on a very firm foundation, and it was hard for either to begin to think less of the other; but Bob could not but acknowledge to himself now that he was bitterly disappointed. Of course it was not the drive with Steve Lenox, alone — that, in itself, was a very small thing. "But why need she have

tried to make me suppose she intended to give it up?" he repeated to himself. "There was surely no necessity for pretending to care so much for my opinion!"

These thoughts, for a time, were very often in Bob's mind, till, at last, ashamed of thinking so much about what was "really not worth so much thought," as he told himself, he determined to try to put them out of his head. It was his last college term, and Seniors are apt to put on the spurs as the last days of their college life draw near. Bob had never, indeed, been a laggard, but he now turned to his books with double zeal, because there was something he wanted to forget, and, so absorbed, had not quite his usual watchfulness for other matters.

"Bob," said his father, one evening, — the winter days were over now, and tardy spring was really beginning, — "don't you think Jimmie is looking miserably?"

"I haven't thought of it, sir," said Bob, with a start. "But, indeed, I haven't observed him as much as usual lately."

"Just notice him, when you see him again," Mr. Stanley said, quietly, and no more was said

on the subject; but Bob went out to Cambridge that night, feeling self-reproached, and resolved that no second thought should come in, henceforth, between his attention and the care for Jimmie, which had always occupied so prominent a place in his mind.

It was his earliest morning thought, and, as the classes assembled in the chapel for prayers, his eyes sought out Jimmie among the crowd of Freshmen. He noticed not only that his face looked pale and thin, but that it wore a haggard, anxious expression, quite different from Jimmie's ordinary happy serenity. How little Jimmie had been to his room of late, and how seldom he had sought him out!

As they went out of chapel he hurried after his brother, to say a word.

"Why, Jim, where have you been lately? You're not looking well, old fellow! What is the matter, and why have you cut me so?"

"I haven't meant to," said Jimmie; "but we've both been so busy, Bob!"

And then both brothers hurried in to breakfast, and the explanation of Jimmie's pale looks was postponed. With Bob's first leisure moment,

however, he went to Jimmie's room. He was out; but his chum—a rare occurrence!—was sitting quietly at the table. A book was before him—(another exceptional thing)—but his eyes were not on it. He was sitting with his face buried in his hands, looking so unlike the merry, boisterous Charley Osborne, that Bob stopped short, astonished.

"Why, Charley!" laying his hand on the boy's shoulder. "What are you thinking about? Where's Jim?"

Charley looked up. "O, is it you, Bob? I believe I did not hear you come in. I was thinking of that poor fellow—I can't get him out of my head!"

"Whom do you mean, Charley? Of whom are you talking?"

"Haven't you heard, then?" said Charley. "Don't you know Lane, in our class? He is a poor student, trying for a scholarship. He comes from the country, and has no friends here; but he's a splendid fellow, and we're all fond of him. He was taken sick last week. I don't know what his illness is; but Jimmie and I, and one or two other fellows, have been taking it turn and turn

about to sit with him by day and watch with him by night. You know he's alone. O, Bob, if you could only have seen his room, just as bare as a barn, and the poor fellow tossing on his bed there, and talking the wildest nonsense! He's worse to-day than he's been yet. I can't get him out of my mind."

Charley covered his face with his hands, and actually shuddered.

"And you boys don't even know what's the matter with Lane?" said Bob. "Has he had no doctor, then?"

"Yes, he has now; a lot of us fellows clubbed together to have him taken proper care of. But it's too late, I'm afraid — it had been going on for several days before we found it out, and he had done nothing. He's as proud as Lucifer, Bob, and would always find some excuse for keeping us away from his room. So we never knew how he lived, actually starving himself to get money for books, and then studying enough to kill himself! We should never have known it, if we had not got frightened by missing him at recitations, and gone to look him up. He might have died like a dog, in the very midst of us, with

not a soul to speak to him — and now it's too late !”

Charley's grief communicated itself to Bob, in spite of his alarm for Jimmie.

“Why didn't you boys come to me?” he said.

“It would have been no use. You could not have done any more for him than we. And Jim said you were ‘cramming’ for examination, and oughtn't to be worried.”

Bob again felt self-reproached, however unjustly ; but his uneasiness for his delicate brother, hanging night and day over the sick bed, would not let him pause to weigh the evidence against himself.

“Is Jimmie with Lane now?” he asked. “It seems cruel to say a word when the poor fellow is so friendless ; but it was very imprudent of you boys to go without even knowing what the illness was. Is Jimmie there?”

“Yes,” said Charley, rising, “just gone. I've but just got back from Lane's room myself. Come, Bob, I'll show you the way.”

And the two boys went together to the sick-room. It was a sad scene on which Bob opened the door. A room which, it was evident, had

been stripped of everything but the barest necessities, till the loving hands of the sick boy's classmates had supplied what was missing there. But not even these could make up for the long-continued privation, the long, proud struggle with hunger, and cold, and want of rest, which the poor fellow had fought out so manfully, and had hidden so resolutely from the sight and knowledge of his fellows. It was too late now—one glance at the fever-wasted frame, wild eyes, and restless limbs, told that—too late! yet surely, even in his delirium, poor Lane must feel that some one was near to supply, as well as might be, the far-away mother's love. Ah, a mother's love and care can be but ill supplied, however ready the hearts that offer them, and the good will of these young nurses was a cloak that must needs cover many defects of judgment. The sun was pouring its bright rays through the uncurtained windows, and heating still more the fevered patient; half a dozen anxious classmates were doing their best, in their anxiety for their comrade, to deprive him of the air and quiet that were so essential to him. By the bedside sat Jimmie, so absorbed in his care for his friend,

that he never once raised his head as his brother entered, or knew he was there till he touched his arm.

"O, Jimmie," said Bob, the thought of the anxiety at home coming up before him at sight of the delicate face and sad eyes that were raised to meet his, "you should not be here."

Jimmie only pointed to the dying boy, whose hot hand he held.

"He has no one but us, Bob," was all he said.

A few words from Bob quickly cleared the room of the other boys. A whispered consultation on the stairs elicited the fact that no very able physician had as yet been called in to take charge of the case, and, with a commission to one of the self-imposed nurses to procure one, Bob returned to the bedside and Jimmie. Anxious as he was for him, it was hard to tear him away from his dying friend.

"Don't think me hard, Jimmie," he said, softly, kneeling down by his brother; "no one in your place could have helped going to this poor fellow. But, Jim, dear, you must think a little of yourself now — it is no use any longer."

"No, it is no use," said Jimmie, letting Lane's

hand drop on the counterpane. "O, Bob, he was such a noble fellow, and I loved him so! O, it does seem as if we might have done more for him!"

And Bob had not the heart to urge him further, or say a word more to induce him to leave his comrade. An unexpected adjunct, however, arrived in the person of the doctor, whose presence seemed to relieve Bob at once of half his anxiety.

"Very reprehensible that he had not been summoned before," the doctor said, "and strange that any one with pretensions to medical knowledge should have opened the sick-room door to all the poor fellow's classmates. Do they want to have scarlet fever all through the college, pray? Ah, poor fellow," with a glance at the bed, "not much hope there. Only think of our knowing so little of what goes on in our very midst! Well," checking himself, with a quick glance at Jimmie, "let the evil stop here, at least; and you, my boy, go to your own room as quickly as may be, if I am not to have you on my hands, as well."

Ominous as the warning sounded in Bob's ears, he was but too thankful to see Jimmie descend

the stairs, and to follow him, bitterly reproaching himself for his real or fancied neglect.

Presentiments of evil are not always verified, and though, but a few days after, poor Lane was taken to the home from which he could never be an exile, and the badge of crape on every arm among his classmates was but a trifling emblem of the heavy grief and loss felt by so many young hearts, Jimmie was not the doctor's next patient. His delicate frame seemed, strange to say, to have withstood the fever that attacked Charley Osborne, and so many of his sturdier comrades; but instead, the shock and grief, as well as the exposure, seemed to have prostrated Jimmie. He had no settled illness, but a sort of weariness and languor appeared to have come over him. He grew daily more thin and pale, and lacked even the energy needful for his beloved studies. Occasionally, too, a hollow cough would make Bob start and look at Jimmie with increased anxiety.

At last one evening, when the boys — as was often the case during term time — had made one of their flying visits to the dear old family home, Mr. Osborne, coming into the dim twilight par-

lor, found Jimmie in his old place on the sofa, before the fire.

"Dreaming day-dreams, as usual, little wise-head?" he said, playfully. (To Mr. Osborne, his grandsons would always be the boys they had been years before.)

"No, grandpapa," said Jimmie, raising his head, with a long sigh, "I believe I was trying to get used to the idea that they were only day-dreams, and would never be anything more."

"What do you mean, my boy?" said Mr. Osborne, struck by the sadness of the tone.

Jimmie drew the old gentleman down beside him, and softly stroked his hand, in the loving, gentle way that was as characteristic of him at fifteen as at nine.

"I mean, dear grandpapa," said he, "that I have had to learn that I can't do what I used to do, and what I thought I always could. It is no use — there is something gone out of me that used to be there. I must give it all up — college, and all I had hoped to do there. I don't want to complain, but I can't help feeling it a little hard, at first."

"What, Jimmie, my boy!" exclaimed Mr.

Osborne, in his impulsive fashion; "you're not disheartened about yourself, surely? — not discouraged because you're not quite a Hercules? No, no, you mustn't talk of giving out while my old bones are active still. Come, come!"

And he patted Jimmie's shoulder, as if to coax him out of some whim.

But Jimmie shook his head gently. "I don't want to seem fanciful about myself," said he; "but I can't help knowing that I am not able nowadays to do what I used. I can't seem to keep my head fixed on what I am about. I think it is because I am so *bodily tired* all the time!"

Jimmie spoke as if apologizing for some fault, rather than as if lamenting some misfortune.

"But, Jimmie, my boy," said Mr. Osborne, trying to quiet his own fears, excited by Jimmie's words, "it is only a temporary thing, you know; only because you have not been well, from exposure to the fever. You must go away for a time, and rest, and we shall have you coming home again, as well as ever."

Jimmie's face suddenly lighted up, as if that had been the medicine in his own thoughts.

"I will tell you what it is," said Mr. Osborne,

his spirits rising with the dawning of a new idea ; "you must go to Europe. There is nothing like that for curing all sorts of troubles ; you must go after Jack and Fanny. Say the word, my boy, and you shall start to-morrow, and Bob shall go with you, to look after you ! "

Again Jimmie's face brightened, as if some very pleasant thing rose up before him. But he only said, slowly, —

"Yes, I should like that so very much ! Thank you, grandpapa ; there is nothing that could be better, only — I can't ask Bob to go with me. I couldn't bear to have him give up his last college term, his Class day, and his oration, when he has been studying so hard. Then, too, I know what Bob wants to do in the world, and I couldn't bear to keep him back for me — no, I can't ask him."

"Then I shall," said his grandfather, resolutely. "I am very sure your health is not to be sacrificed for Bob's plans. He is not established in life yet, as Arthur is, and there would be no real break, which would be disadvantageous to his prospects. I shall speak of it to Bob, the very next time I see him, and I'll engage that he shan't refuse."

"Refuse!" echoed Jimmie; "no, he wouldn't do that; he would be only too ready to give up everything for me, as he always does. It is I who don't want to have him go. Now, promise me, grandpapa, that you won't say one word about it. I am sure that some other way will turn up for me, if I am to go."

There was no resisting Jimmie when he asked anything, and Mr. Osborne reluctantly promised.

This faith of Jimmie's that if "*he was* to go, some other way would turn up for him," was speedily seen to rest on a firm foundation. A few days after, the postman brought a letter from Arthur, — one of his easy, entertaining epistles, — in which, after writing pleasantly of various unconnected matters, he ended up with (quite as a matter of course), —

"By the way, you must not be surprised if you see me in Boston again very soon after this reaches you. I know you considered me a fixture for life in New York; but the fates have ordained otherwise. Mr. Melville and I have amicably agreed to proceed, each on our separate way, and neither business nor New York has any further attraction for me. So I shall come

back to Boston — very opportunely, as I flatter myself; for, from something grandfather has written, I gather that a European tour is being talked of, and I shall arrive just in time to be Jimmie's favored escort, and to allow Bob leisure for his beloved grindstone! There is nothing I should more enjoy for myself than a trip to Europe. So all parties are satisfied. With love till I see you, &c."

"Arthur coming home!" exclaimed Mr. Osborne. "Arthur going to give up business, and dissolve his connection with Mr. Melville! But what does it all mean?"

And that is just what I am going to tell you.

CHAPTER XI.

PEEPS BEHIND THE CURTAIN.

THERE are two peeps which I propose to give you, or, perhaps I should say more correctly, a peep behind two different curtains. The first one rises on Arthur and Steve Lenox, sitting in the room which had so impressed Bob with its luxuriousness. But neither the beauty nor the comfort of his surroundings seems to have attractions for Arthur to-day. His face, as he leans back in his arm-chair, moodily drumming with his fingers on the table beside him, is gloomy enough.

Nothing could be a greater contrast than the face of his companion, who leans against the mantel-piece, in his old attitude, and looks, with his old, lazy, satirical smile at Arthur's downcast face.

"Come, cheer up, Arty!" he said, at last,

when he had quietly smoked out his cigar, and patiently waited for his friend to speak. "You are enough to give one the blues to-night! You're not the first fellow, man, who has got into difficulties. Indeed, it's a question whether you've ever been fairly out of them yourself. So what's the use of such a long face as that? I must beg that you will be better company."

"I wish I could, with all my heart, Steve," said Arthur; "but I cannot see anything very enlivening in my prospects to get up my spirits on, and your remark about my normal condition isn't calculated to help me. I tell you I am driven desperate for money."

Steve only raised his eyebrows, and shrugged his shoulders.

"It has always been my curse," said Arthur, with something very like a groan, "to be thrown with people like you, Steve, who only need to put your hand into a magic purse to find it filled. It takes little enough time to get to the bottom of mine!"

"Is it empty?" asked Steve, with his indolent laugh. "Then go to work, and fill it. You came to New York to devote yourself to your business."

"I hate my business!" said Arthur, almost angrily. "I came to New York to make money, and thanks to old Melville's limited confidence in my powers, and, I suppose, to my hatred for the business, I find it a hard thing to do."

"Then beg or borrow some!" said Steve, with another shrug.

Arthur made no reply.

"Or," went on Steve, airily, "if you're tired of that, do the one thing left, and *steal* some! O, you needn't be offended. I have no eye to old Melville's safes and strong boxes. There's a very legitimate course of robbery open to needy adventurers nowadays—though stealing is a very hard name to apply to a legal appropriation of another's funds—a mutual benefit society!"

"I don't know what you're talking of, Steve," Arthur interrupted, impatiently.

"No? Why, I was only recommending to you a *mariage de convenance*. Marry some pretty girl, who combines solid attractions with her other charms, and fill that poor, empty, gaping purse of yours!"

Still Arthur made no reply: he was in no mood for Steve's raillery.

"And, speaking of old Melville," went on his imperturbable counsellor, "he offers, I am sure, a helping hand. True, there is a popular prejudice against helping one's self out of a neighbor's money-box, but none against appropriating his niece. What can be more apropos than the pretty Lillie, with her comfortable little property, her expectations from her uncle, and her liking for yourself?"

Arthur looked up with something like a start. "Rumor says you have designs of your own in that quarter, Steve."

"Rumor very often lies," returned the young man, coolly; "besides, I never stand in the light of a friend in need! Come, Arthur, you're not disinclined to that, surely?"

"But there are two sides to most questions," said Arthur, laughing a little nervously. "You forget that Lillie herself might not fall in so readily with your pleasant scheme."

"O, pooh!" returned Steve, with his well-assured ease; "you have your way all paved for you, Arthur. Nothing could be pleasanter than your present relations with Miss Lillie, and I'll trust to your attractions and her vanity for im-

proving it. Come! think over my suggestion, man, and have the grace to thank me for my disinterestedness. Meantime, show your gratitude, and oblige me by getting rid of a little of your taciturnity!"

The other curtain draws up on Mrs. Melville's parlor, that lady, and her niece.

"I really am vexed with you, Lillie," she said, in a tone that was quite in accordance with the declaration. "Ever since the visit of that very impertinent and officious young man, you haven't been yourself in the least. Now, I do not at all object to caprice when it is not carried too far. You know I have often told you that it heightens a girl's attractions. But all things in moderation; and I can assure you, Lillie, that, if you persevere in the distant, cold manner you have adopted in society lately, you will end by being anything but a belle!"

As Lillie deigned no reply, Mrs. Melville went on:—

"I will not say a word about Mr. Lenox. You know as well as I, Lillie, that he is not a young man to be trifled with. I am sure your own good sense will show you what you are throwing away

there, without the necessity of my pointing it out. But in other directions I must recommend a different manner to you. I should be too much disappointed if the season were to pass and find you unengaged!"

Mrs. Melville always spoke of life as one vast "German," in which the object was to obtain eligible partners, and where the unengaged might go to the wall! Of course the ill effects of such views could not but be felt by the niece, who had grown up under her influence; yet they were so repugnant to Lillie's true nature that she often openly expressed her aversion of them.

"Aunt Bella," she exclaimed, impatiently, "it makes me perfectly sick when you talk like that! I might do worse things, surely, than go through one season unengaged. I declare, when you speak of marrying, in that way, you make me feel as if I hated the whole thing, and would never go into society again. You sometimes make me want to say I believe I will never marry at all."

"My love," said Mrs. Melville, alarmed, "I am sure, for my sake, you will never wish to say that. I don't want to vex you, dear. I will not

say a word about 'eligible young men' if it offends your delicacy. I only recommend, for your own good, that you should be more generally affable. No girl likes to be less popular at the end than at the beginning of the season; yet I can see that even Arthur, who is on such friendly terms with you, is quite frozen and repelled by your new manner."

Little as Lillie appeared to heed her aunt's words, there was one weak spot — that of a girl's sensitive vanity — where they sank in, and took root. Shrewd Mrs. Melville was woman of the world enough to know this fact, and be sure that that last quiet little innuendo of hers would hit the mark. Lillie had not been very happy of late; she had been deeply hurt at the thought of Bob's undeserved opinion of her, and, with him in her mind, had insensibly tried to get rid of some of the society faults he had so frankly pointed out to her. Besides, with blunt, honest Bob so vividly before her, the hollowness of many of these fashionable young men was really distasteful to Lillie. Her manner only expressed what she sometimes felt — a sort of weariness and satiety of society life.

But now it was different: those well-chosen words of Mrs. Melville's had roused the slumbering demon again, and, when she laid her head on the pillow that night, she was repeating to herself, rebelliously, —

"No; nobody shall say I am not the belle I was. They *shall* admire me, if I have anything to do with it!"

In such matters, to resolve is to carry out; and for a week after, Mrs. Melville surely had no reason to complain of her niece's manner.

"You're like yourself again now, Lillie," said Arthur, one evening. "You have been so stately these last few weeks that you've actually frightened me."

"You needn't have shown it quite so plainly," said Lillie, with a half-smiling pout. "It is enough to make one want to try something different, when everybody seems inclined to run away!"

"That was all your fancy," said Arthur. "But, talking of trying something new, how would you like *me* to try something different too? Will you give me leave?"

"I have nothing to say about it," said Lillie,

indifferently. "You are perfectly free to do as you choose, so far as I am concerned."

"Really?" said Arthur. "Then I shall avail myself of the permission at once."

Light and laughing as Arthur's tone had been, there was yet something in it which almost alarmed Lillie. She really felt as if he were going to do or say something in earnest, and, though she had not at all understood his meaning, she felt half afraid to have it come.

She had had time, however, to forget all about it before a note came to her, which she opened carelessly, thinking it some little, trifling communication from Arthur.

DEAR LILLIE: You told me, some days ago, that I might, so far as you were concerned, "try something different." I meant in my demeanor towards you. Yet I do not believe, on second thoughts, that this change will be quite so unexpected to you as I gave you reason to suppose. I wish, unless you tell me not, to come and explain myself to you more fully this evening.

A. S.

What did it all mean? Lillie looked at the mysterious note for a few minutes in a sort of stupefied amazement; then, crumpling it up, thrust it into the fire, resolved to forget all about it till evening should bring Arthur to explain.

No girl, however, can be quite unconscious of what is meant under such circumstances, and Lillie's heart quite fluttered as she walked into the parlor to meet the guest who had just been announced.

Arthur was standing by the window, waiting, somewhat nervously, it seemed, for Lillie's appearance; and now that she had come, both young people seemed a little uncomfortable.

"I am sure," Lillie had once said, in one of her perverse fits, to Fanny Osborne, — "I am sure I should like nothing better than to hear people tell me they cared for me, whether I could give them what they wanted in return or not. I really think I should enjoy giving them the chance to say it, if I knew, ever so well, what my own answer would be."

"I know better," said Fanny; and although Lillie had persisted at the time in the avowal, she found out how well founded Fanny's opin-

ion had been, by her own constrained feelings. It was mere nervousness and *longing to have it over* that made her exclaim almost impatiently, as she threw herself back on the sofa,—

“What did you write me such an absurd note for, Arthur? What could you mean?”

“Why,” said Arthur, coming away from the window, with an uncomfortable little laugh, “will it need so much explanation?—can’t you imagine, Lillie?”

“No, indeed, I can’t,” said Lillie, positively. “You must tell me yourself, Arthur, if you expect me to understand you.”

Arthur sat down, and for a few minutes both parties were entirely silent. How strange that at such a time Arthur’s natural ease and grace should have wholly deserted him! But it requires a consummate hypocrite to feign successfully in cases like the present one, and Arthur, with all his faults, was very far from being that. So he sat for a few minutes nervously drawing the pattern of the carpet with his cane, and feeling Lillie’s eyes fixed upon him. When he spoke, at last, it was with anything but his usual happy ease of expression.

"I don't think, Lillie, that what I am going to say will surprise you so very much. I am sure it is not the first time you have ever thought that I cared for you — is it?"

Lillie opened her blue eyes wide for a moment, then replied, with the utmost calmness, "Yes, indeed, it is."

Her tone might well have discomfited Arthur, but, rallying from his chagrin, he said, —

"Is it so very unnatural that I should speak of such things, Lillie? I thought they were talked of, for us, some years ago."

"O," said Lillie, with the same air of decision, "if that is all you mean, I am not so much surprised. Yes; aunt Bella has always talked about our flirting ever since I was twelve; but why do you speak of that so seriously? You made me think you were in earnest."

"And was I not?" said Arthur, rising, and coming to Lillie's sofa. "Is it so utterly impossible that I should have grown to feel for you in earnest what we only laughed about once? Is it so impossible that I should have come to ask you the question whether you cannot feel for me in earnest too?"

No, it would not quite do. Eagerly as Arthur spoke now, there was something in his tone which was different from the earnestness and depth of noble, self-forgetful love. Still, his eagerness had its effect on Lillie: she began to lose her calmness, and to grow agitated; she bent down her head, and made no answer, while the hand that rested on her lap even trembled.

"It is so far from impossible to me, Lillie," said Arthur, growing warmer, "that I have come to tell you how much I love you, and to ask you if you can give me your love in return. Do you believe I am in earnest now?"

As he spoke he tried to take Lillie's hand, but she drew it away.

"Do you believe me now, Lillie?" he repeated, for she did not speak.

Then Lillie raised her eyes, and looked him full in the face.

"No, Arthur, I do not," she said, quietly.

For a moment Arthur flushed, and his eyes fell before hers, as if he were detected in some deceit. But his self-possession did not so easily desert him; and besides, Lillie's very reserve urged him on.

"I have given you no reason to disbelieve what I say, Lillie," he said, vehemently, "and you are doing me great injustice if you think me insincere in what I say to you now. I do love you, and I ask you again, in all sincerity, if you can love me."

Lillie's lip trembled, but she made a vigorous effort to control herself, and answered, —

"No, I cannot."

Arthur's face fell, but, before he could utter a word, Lillie had burst out passionately, —

"And I will tell you why, Arthur — because I do not believe that you really love me. Say what you please, I am sure of it. I don't know why you want me, but I am sure it is not for myself; and I do not understand how you dare to come and ask me to love you; but if you asked me in ever such earnest, I could not do it!"

Arthur's face flushed now with something more than mere embarrassment, but he controlled himself admirably, and only said, —

"You do not tell me why, Lillie."

"But I *will* tell you," said Lillie, while the indignant tears filled her eyes. "It is because,

Arthur, I could never love any one enough to marry him, unless I could look up to him, and respect him with all my heart and soul! I don't care for very much else, whatever people say, but I do want *that*! I am just a weak little creature myself, and when I marry, I want somebody strong to set me right! And now that you have asked me, I will tell you plainly that you could never do this. You haven't strength enough to keep yourself straight—you know it is so! I declare, I can hardly help crying sometimes, when I hear people talk of you as if you were one of Mr. Lenox's "fast set," when I know how different you ought to be, with such people as uncle Arthur and Bob belonging to you. I declare, I can hardly —. But there, it is no use for me to talk of it. No, I can never, never, never love you! I tell you so just as much as I should if you were in earnest in loving me."

"Really, Lillie," said Arthur, beginning to lose patience, and crimsoning at Lillie's words, "you might, at least, treat me with common courtesy, if you cannot give me the answer I hoped to hear. I certainly have not insulted you, even if my proposal were an unwelcome one."

"Yes, you have," said Lillie, her breast heaving; "that is just what you *have* done, Arthur. I call it an insult, when any man, no matter who, comes and pretends to care for me, when, all the time, he is only thinking of his own advantage. There, I can't talk any more. Love? No! That isn't the kind of love *I* want. I wish you would go, please. It makes me cry only to think of it."

Arthur, discomfited, mortified, and angry, needed no second bidding to go. The front door shut with a loud clang, and Lillie, burying her face in the sofa-pillows, cried to her heart's content. Frivolous as some people thought her, this little maiden had a very high ideal of what true love should be, and her feelings had received a rude shock from what she justly deemed Arthur's counterfeit of it.

Now, as we are very apt to fancy, when our vanity and self-love are wounded, and our false pretences exposed, that it is our sensitive feelings which are hurt, Arthur chose to fancy, after his parting from Lillie, that he had been very much in love with her, and that he had had a cruel disappointment. Feeling some natural reluctance to meet her, after her very frank avowal of her

sentiments towards him (or, as he told himself, after her rejection of his addresses), he began to find business more irksome than ever, and to wish heartily for an opportunity to leave New York. Such a loophole of escape opened for him when his grandfather alluded, in a letter, to Jimmie's delicate state of health, and reluctance to ask Bob to accompany him abroad. His resolution was taken immediately, and a duty that chimes so harmoniously with inclination is seldom slighted.

"Young Stanley is going to leave New York," announced Mr. Melville at the dinner table, a few evenings after.

"What, Arthur!" his wife exclaimed. "Going home, do you say? Why, what's the meaning of it?"

"He says his brother is out of health, and he must go abroad with him. But that's all an excuse, in my opinion. The truth is, Arthur has been sick of business ever since he began it, and, so far as my judgment goes, he's well out of it."

"His brother ill, and going abroad?" Mrs. Melville repeated, with an air of interest. "It is not the one who was here in the winter, I suppose?"

"No, it is not Bob," said Mr. Melville, with a sly glance at Lillie, "but it's some one who wants Arthur to take care of him. What are you going to do without your escort, miss?"

"O, I think I shall be able to get along pretty well, thank you, uncle Henry," Lillie replied. But, though she tried to speak nonchalantly, she grew so very red, that it attracted the attention of Mrs. Melville, who looked at her very fixedly and severely, as she said, —

"Well, I suppose we shall see him before he goes, and hear about his sudden change of plan. It certainly seems very strange that he should not have spoken of it before. I am sure there are enough other brothers in the Stanley family to go abroad with the sick boy."

"Bella looks as if she expected Lillie to explain the whole matter," said Mr. Melville, mischievously, as he sat down to the enjoyment of slippers, arm-chair, and newspaper.

And, in truth, Mrs. Melville's demeanor to her niece, all through the evening, said, as plainly as actions can, "I suspect that you are accountable for this move. I hold you responsible for the whole affair."

"Yes," Arthur said to Bob, a few days later, as he was lounging in his brother's room at Cambridge, "I was certainly heartily sick of business, but I had another strong reason for wishing to be away from New York."

"And what might that be?" asked Bob.

"Why, to tell the truth," said Arthur, with an air of confidence which seemed as little genuine as had been his declaration to Lillie, "something had happened which would have made New York society less pleasant to me. I tell it in confidence, Bob, for disappointed men are not apt to boast of it."

"Disappointed?" echoed Bob.

"Rejected — anything you please to call it! There, if you will have it," said Arthur, "I had made a formal offer of my heart and hand to Lillie — told her that I loved her, and the little flirt —"

Bob looked up at his brother, coloring fiery red. "You told Lillie *that*?" he said, slowly.

"Arthur, it was not true."

"Really," said Arthur, dropping the careless, *blasé* tone in which he had been speaking, "really, Bob! And where is your proof, pray?"

"This," said Bob, with decision. "If you had cared for her one pin, you would not tell me what you did just now. And secondly, no man who really loved a girl would call her flirt, simply for refusing him."

Arthur hesitated for a moment, as if in doubt whether to be angry; but his easy temper and dislike of all unpleasantness getting the mastery, he answered, good-humoredly, "I did not know I was to come to you, Bob, for lessons in such matters. As for Lillie's being a flirt, I might not give her the name, if I were the first. Ask Steve Lenox — ask any young man in New York society — they will all say the same."

"Very likely," said Bob, impatiently. "Very possibly she may deserve the name from some people. That's neither my business nor yours; she does not deserve the name from you, Arthur, for she never gave you reason to suppose she cared for you, and, I am sure, had no more idea of your caring for her, than — than I shall have, if you repeat it a dozen times more. I beg your pardon — don't let's say a word more on the subject."

And Bob shut up his books, and pushed back

his chair, as if he wished to turn over a new leaf.

So Arthur and Jimmie sailed out on the world of waters, where so many of our dear ones are already embarked, and there were more empty places in the chimney-corner.

CHAPTER XII.

"FIRE ! FIRE !"

"WHAT is out of sight is out of mind," say the wise ones ; but however true that may be in poetry, and however many pages back we may have lost sight of Geoffrey, I cannot help hoping that you may still have kept a corner of your memory green and fresh for the merry-faced sailor-boy. Though I cannot follow him over the waters any more than his mother at home could do, and though, in that long China voyage, letters were impossibilities, I am sure I can picture his life on shipboard as well as Jimmie or Mrs. Stanley. I know that, with all his merry words before Captain Hawley and the men, with all his daring and his longing to try the world for himself, there were some hours when Geoffrey's stout heart grew very tender at the thought of home and his mother, when sleep would not visit

his pillow for the recollection of the things he had sailed away from, and there was a dull pain about his heart, which had no other name than homesickness. I know all this, even though these feelings came up in the night, when there was no one by to see, and Geoffrey was quite sure that he was the only person who knew of them. I know that whatever rough scenes, or coarse words, met his eyes and ears, there was never a word on his lips which his mother might not have heard him speak, and that, whatever temptations might lie in his way, the thought of her kept him as pure and innocent as if he were still at home. There was no "cant" about Geoffrey. The men called him "a plucky little fellow," and liked him heartily, but were never troubled by his piety. Yet, though he never talked about his feelings, deep down in his heart there was something which would have kept him straight in very crooked ways: perhaps it was nothing more than this thought of, and love for, his mother! For the rest, I know that he was as daring and cool as if he had been an "old salt," instead of a "young land-lubber;" that the *true grit* which had made him keep his hold on the sea-washed

rock in his childish days did not desert him in the storms he weathered now; and that he had never yet repented of trying thoroughly, and "in the rough," the calling he had chosen. And there you have Geoffrey!

"You shall see us back a year from now," Captain Hawley had said, when the ship sailed away from the wharf, and the anxious home faces assembled there to look a last look at their sailor-boy; and now a year was fast rolling away. While matters at home had been going on so quietly, while students had been working their way through the first term to vacation, and through the second term to Class day, Geoffrey had been sailing round the world, until, as in Bob's old story, he found himself landed in China.

He had met the rough autumn gales and the fierce winter storms, had hung on the mast when the ship was rocking so that he felt as if he were clinging to the end of a long fishing-rod, just about to be dipped into the briny deep. He had seen the mountain billows we read of in wonderful books of travel come dashing over the deck, looking as if they would engulf the vessel in their green, glassy depths. He had lain in his little berth

when he felt as if every minute might be his last, so fiercely did the winds and waves rage round him, and so completely at the mercy of the elements did the defenceless ship appear. And from all these experiences Geoffrey had come out safely, with the addition of a cool, steady head and sturdy heart.

And now the good ship was homeward bound, and Geoffrey, as he watched the stars night after night, knew that every hour was bringing him nearer and nearer home. He always felt less far away when he looked at the stars, for he remembered Jimmie's fondness for star-gazing, and he would often wonder if their eyes were fixed on the same constellation. He did not know that Jimmie was sailing over the same vast, watery plain, with the same bright, wide-spread canopy above him.

One night Geoffrey was taking his turn at the watch, sitting quietly on the deck, looking from the sky to the glowing, phosphorescent water. It was almost like fire, he said to himself, as he watched the long, flaming track left by the vessel. But fire at sea is always such a terrible thought, that even such a comparison is enough to make

one shudder; and Geoffrey was fain to find some pleasanter simile, when suddenly, as he sat, a strange, unwonted smell came to his nostrils. He started quickly to his feet, with the chill his ugly thought had sent through him again creeping over his limbs. A smell — could it have been — like *fire*? No, of course not! It was only his fancy: but, uneasy still, he walked the deck, throwing a startled glance around. What was it met his eyes in the forward part of the vessel? Surely a faint little flicker of flame, shooting up between the planks of the vessel's side! He rushed forward, stood for a moment still, then uttered one terrible cry.

Fire! Fire! A lone waste of waters, not a foothold in sight, save the ship which sheltered them, and within the very heart of that ship a devouring element which would drive them forth anywhere, anywhere, to escape from it! Fire at sea! O, it is a thought that will send a chill through the frame of the most unimaginative, even though he is sitting, safe and comfortable, in a home leagues away from such horrors!

All was alive in a moment after that wild cry from Geoffrey — the deck swarming with terror-

stricken faces. How did it happen? No time to ask now, while the fire was there, and there was even a faint hope of mastering it. Time enough for questions by and by; this was the time to work.

Only one poor, conscience-stricken wretch remembered mistily a night-watch, when, with senses confused by the secret dram he would have given worlds never to have come by, he had furtively lighted his pipe with a coal from the cook's fire, and had hastily thrown it down, crushing it beneath his foot, and scarcely stopping to see if all the sparks had died out of it.

One spark had lingered, and, dropping into a crack, had slowly eaten its way down, down into the hold, mouldered on for a day, undiscovered, in the boards, reached some crates of china, swathed in bands of rice-straw, spread swiftly through the hold, licked its way up the planks, and now burst forth from the vessel's side, sending its cruel tongues of flame high in the air!

No, no time for questions; no time for terror, even! All was stern, desperate work; a hand-to-hand struggle with the monster Death, which stared them in the face. No, no time for words

while there was a breath of hope that they might work their way to life ! With pump, hose, buckets, they worked and toiled. In vain ! The water poured on the raging fire was but as oil to the flames ; they seemed to mock at it. The hope had grown fainter and fainter, louder and louder the murmurs of the men.

"It is of no use," said the captain, suddenly stopping short ; "we are only wasting time."

The words seemed to have scattered all discipline, all self-control, to the winds with the breath that uttered them. There were wild cries of terror, hurried rushing back and forth.

"To the boats !" was the cry.

Alas ! one boat had been, from the first, in the very midst of the raging flames. What was the other among so many ?

As the captain turned from asking himself this question to look at the crowd of faces round him, he seemed deserted by all the faces he had looked to see. His eyes met those of Geoffrey, wide-dilated with the despair which had seized upon them all, and blanched the boy's cheeks to an ashy pallor.

"Look, Captain Hawley !" said he, and pointed

over the vessel's side. Half out of sight over the tossing waters, lighted by the angry glare of the flames, they saw the smaller boat, crowded with men. While the few staunch and loyal hearts had been toiling for the ship round the captain, these had stolen away, unseen in the absorbing frenzy of that desperate work, and seized on the one frail straw of support.

"The cowards !" burst from the captain's lips.

"O, my mother !" the boy exclaimed, under his breath.

The words died away on Captain Hawley's tongue, as he heard the exclamation.

"It is all one," he said ; "we could not all have gone. We must take our chance together, my men. It's sink or swim with us, and leave the ship to her fate. But, Geoffrey, we will keep together, my boy. While there is one breath left in my body, I will hold you up ! Your mother gave you to me, and I'll give you back to her again, or we'll go to the bottom together ! Come ; there's no time to lose."

The captain had grasped Geoffrey's hand while he spoke, and looked straight into the boy's eyes. It seemed as if his courage and daring fired Geoffrey too.

The flames roared and crackled at the vessel's side, as if to warn them to trust to her no longer. The few swimmers lashed themselves to anything they could lay hands on,—any frail prop that might serve to hold them up when their own strength was spent,—and, one by one, leaped from the burning ship.

Captain Hawley had lashed Geoffrey and himself to the same spar, and, with one backward glance at the vessel, the two plunged together into the merciless sea, whose waters, crimsoned by the fiery glow, stretched around them far as the eye could reach!

CHAPTER XIII.

ON LAND.

"O BOB," said his little sister, leaning from the window where, as usual on Saturday afternoons, she sat to greet him on his return from Cambridge,—these two were the only ones at home now,—“O, Bob, Lillie is not coming on to Class day!”

“Well,” said Bob, gulping down a good deal of disappointment with the word, “well, I’m sorry to hear it. Why not, Lilliekin? What does she say?”

“O, she writes that she is going to Newport with Mrs. Melville this summer, and ‘is afraid she shall hardly have time to get a glimpse of Rockedge’—just as if she couldn’t if she wanted to! And O, Bob, I do think she might make time to come on to your Class day, when you’re to be orator; and Arthur, and Jim, and Geoffrey

are all away, and there's nobody to *see you do it* but poor little me! O, I do think it's too bad of her!"

And Lillie found relief for her feelings of indignation and regret in a most fervent embrace of her favorite brother.

"Well, Lillie, we must make the best of it," Bob said. "And I think — don't you? — that we shall be able to spare the people who don't want to come."

"But when they are so much wanted!" said Lillie, a little dolefully.

"So I say, Lillie," said Guy Dalton, who, with a letter from his sister in his hand, was just leaving the house. "Ah, Bob, how are you? Yes, I feel tempted to write to Lillie that, when her presence would be so useful to Sue just now, she might, for once, give up what she wants herself. But I am afraid she is getting altogether unused to do that."

"And how is the new incumbent?" said Bob, without replying to Guy's remark. "I hear Master Robin's nose has been put out of joint — how is the young lady?"

"O, all that heart could desire," said the

new incumbent's papa, his face losing its cloud. "And as for Robin's nose being out of joint, I only wish you could see him! He is so elated with the importance of having a baby sister, that he can't even condescend to be naughty. 'Do you think you shall keep her, mamma?' the young gentleman inquired, when he first saw his new sister. Sue said she thought of doing so, and asked Robin if he should advise it. 'Why, yes,' said he, hesitating, 'I guess I would, if I were you.' And I believe his Majesty thinks the baby's presence in the house entirely due to his gracious permission."

And off hurried Guy, too happy, just now, in domestic affairs, to remember his disappointment in Lillie.

So Class day came and went, and Lillie was not there to see; and Bob, with all his ambitions realized, yet found, as usual, the roc's egg wanting in his palace! It was, certainly, a very different Class day from Arthur's, when all had been so sunny and bright, and the home band had as yet no breaks in its ranks. But, scattered as they were, there were yet some hearts left to beat high with pride and love, when Bob rose on

the platform, looking so strange and unfamiliar in the long, black gown, and delivered the oration, which his little sister believed implicitly to be the finest ever written.

As the page of Bob's college career was turned, and he prepared to step out into the real world, it was not only the partial ones at home who said that his battle in the little world he was leaving had been bravely fought and won.

"Well, Bob," said his father, that evening, "are you ready yet to say what you are going to do in life?"

"I think so — quite ready, sir."

"Well?" said his father; for Bob made a long pause.

"I believe I have thought about it long enough to be sure that I am in earnest. I have always wished and meant to be a minister."

"Well, Bob," said his father, with a pleased smile, "it is what I have always wished, though not *meant* that you should be. Nobody must undertake to be that unless he has considered it well, and is as much in earnest as I am sure you are — as you have always been in everything you have undertaken. Only remember that there are

sacrifices to be made, — as in everything worth doing, — and that, above all, you must lay aside the ambition that has pushed you so hard all through your life, and I have no fears for you. An earnest purpose, and courage to speak the truth, are the best weapons, and you have them both. There's the right hand of fellowship for you, my boy."

"O, Bob," said little Lillie, when Bob's purpose was talked of, "are you really going to be a minister? O, don't get over being merry — will you? Don't grow grave, and glum, and poky — ministers always are."

"Thank you, Miss Puss," said her father, laughing; "that is frank, at any rate, though it certainly isn't flattering. Am I 'grave, and glum, and poky,' then?"

"No, of course not, papa," said Lillie, somewhat discomfited; "but that's so different! Bob is a boy, and if he gives up his rowing and his fun because he's to be a minister, I shall be so unhappy! I shall feel as if I did not know him."

"You needn't be afraid, Lillie," said Bob. "I'll promise you I won't change in anything you

care for. You won't see my face grow long, or my oars laid on the shelf, I assure you."

As usual, Lillie Dalton had scarcely received her due, as regarded the absence from Class day. It was neither indifference to Bob, forgetfulness of Sue, or entire absorption in gayety, that kept her away. As usual, aunt Bella's insinuations were at the bottom of it. Poor Lillie had been made to suffer a great deal of petty martyrdom, after Mrs. Melville had discovered the true reason of Arthur's departure from New York, and Bob's name was mentioned, at least once a day, with opprobrious comments and pointed allusions, for a long time after. At last Lillie lost patience, and when her aunt was one day lamenting over Lillie's perverse fastidiousness in society, and the shame and mortification it was to Mrs. Melville to see her throw away all the attention she might have for the sake of a "mere awkward college boy, with no polish or position, — give up all her chances of a brilliant summer at a gay watering-place, to go rushing on to his Class day, and encouraging his impertinent interference in her affairs," Lillie turned, and said, very quietly, —

"Aunt Bella, I will go to Newport, or anywhere that you please. I will not go on to Class day, and I will even give up staying at Rockedge this summer; but I cannot have you talk to me any more, in the way you do, about Bob Stanley. I have borne it as long as I can, and I can't bear it another day. It is unwomanly, and it makes me ashamed to hear it."

And Mrs. Melville was wise enough to know she had gone sufficiently far. Nobody knew how many tears Lillie shed in secret over the sacrificed Class day, and the thought of the unjust charges of indifference and lack of affection towards Sue, which she would have to suffer from Bob and Guy. Lillie was proud, and her delicacy had been sorely wounded by aunt Bella's insinuations. She consented to go to Newport rather than incur the cool, mocking smile she always expected now to see on her aunt's lips when Rockedge or home matters were talked of; and she paid for her weakness, as we all do in such cases, by having to bear unjust judgment in the minds of those she loved.

None of the Rockedge party had expected to see anything of her this summer; but one sultry,

August day, when the feminine portion of the household were all gathered on the piazza to catch the first cooling breath from the sea, in fluttered Lillie, fresh and breezy from her trip in the steamer, rosy and beaming with smiles.

"Why, Lillie," said Sue, rising to kiss her, "where in the world did you drop from? I had given up the very thought of seeing you this summer."

"And I had given up all but the hope of seeing you," said Lillie. "I didn't really think it would be realized, but aunt Bella came up to Boston for a day's shopping, and I declared I would have my way for once, and run down to Rockedge to see you and baby. Where is she?"

"Then you did really care about us, dear?" said Sue, affectionately, when the new-comer had been displayed, with all the encomiums usual on such occasions.

"Care about you! O, Sue! But I suppose you think I don't, and Guy calls me giddy and selfish. Well, I dare say I deserve that; but it isn't true that I don't care about you, whatever you may fancy."

"But, Lillie," said her little namesake, whose

sharp tongue never lost an opportunity of exercising itself, "why, if you care so much, didn't you come on before? Why did you give up Bob's Class day? And why do you stay at Newport, instead of being here with us?"

Lillie's face clouded, and Sue gave a warning glance at the young critic.

"You say you have had your way for once to-day, Lillie," she said, smiling; "isn't Newport your way, dear? Aren't you having a happy summer?"

"O, yes," said Lillie, with a half sigh. "I suppose nobody forces me to do what I don't choose. But, Sue, there are *botherations*. I wish I could be here just with you, and forget about them all."

"So you shall, for to-day, at least," said Sue, with her sweet voice and smile, and Robin coming in just then with shouts for his "pretty aunty," a happy diversion was effected.

Lillie was all smiles and sunshine for the rest of the morning, and till the return of the gentlemen from town. Then she stood on the piazza, with a slightly conscious air, as Bob and Guy came up the avenue.

"What, Lillie!" Guy exclaimed, as he came in sight of the house. "You are a stranger indeed. I thought you had cut our acquaintance."

"Now don't, Guidie," Lillie said, coaxingly. "Won't you make me happy while I am here, and believe that I should like to be here longer?"

"If you say so, Lillie; but have you no eyes for Bob? You haven't seen him, either, for some time."

Bob and Lillie shook hands, and I am quite sure that, as they did so, the thought of that unlucky sleigh-ride rose before them both. Bob, however, was ashamed that he had allowed himself to remember it, and put it out of mind at once; but Lillie, looking up and meeting his eye, was more sure than ever that he despised her for her hypocrisy.

Rockedge, however, was too free from constraint, and home too happy a place to be in, for clouds to linger there long. Grandpapa's hearty caresses, uncle Arthur's quieter welcome, and Sue's affection, to say nothing of Bob's and little Lillie's mirth, made up too sunny an atmosphere for any unpleasant memories, and the day passed quickly away.

As the hour for the starting of the steamer approached, Lillie had even resolved she would speak to Bob of that unlucky mistake, and set herself right in his eyes. She turned to look for him, but Bob was not on the piazza: he was sitting on the hall stairs, so absorbed with the evening paper, that any allusion to the New York visit would have been out of the question at the moment. While waiting for a more propitious one, old Prissy came up on the piazza.

"Ah, Miss Lillie," said she, "we don't often get a sight of you nowadays, and I suppose we'd better make the most of this one — hadn't we? We shan't have the chance long."

"Why, I don't mean to die just yet, Prissy," said Lillie, laughing.

"You needn't tell me that," said Prissy. "There are weddings in the world, as well as funerals. Ah, you see I've heard all about Mr. Lenox."

"And what about him?" asked Lillie, amused at Prissy's shrewd smiles and mysterious shakings of the head.

"O, a little bird told me he was engaged to a pretty young lady. I know all about it, you see."

"Little birds aren't always to be trusted," said Lillie, with a glance at the stairs and Bob.

"And young ladies sometimes tell fibs, when such things are talked about," returned Prissy. "You don't deny it, Miss Lillie."

Before Lillie could answer, Bob suddenly started up, crumpling the paper in his hand, and thrusting it in his pocket. She had noticed him bending over it with so grave and absorbed a face, that she wondered if he could have heard their talk.

"She doesn't deny it, Mr. Bob," said Prissy, as he came out on the piazza.

"Then we may believe it's true, I suppose, Prissy," Bob said. He spoke so absently that Lillie turned to look at him in astonishment.

"Why, Bob," she said, half laughing, "I believe you don't know what we're talking about—do you?"

Bob started, and looked at her in a bewildered sort of way.

"I'll tell you, Mr. Bob," said Prissy, slyly. "I was telling Miss Lillie how a little bird whispered to me that Mr. Lenox had something to do with her being at Newport this summer; and she didn't deny it."

"Yes," said Bob, in the same half-absent way. "Then you see I was not so much abroad in my reply, after all."

And that was all! Was it any wonder that Lillie was surprised and piqued? "Well, really, if Bob cared so little for her doings that he could accept, without inquiry or comment, Prissy's word for such a report concerning her, there was little need for her to explain herself to him. It certainly did not matter in what light he held her!"

She turned away to hide the tears of vexation and mortification that rose to her eyes; but he seemed to notice nothing.

Both Guy and Bob accompanied her to the boat, and one of them was to be her escort on the trip, and see her safely again in her aunt's charge. The sun was beginning to dip down towards the waters, and to cast a rosy tinge over sea and shore, but there were no rosy clouds for Lillie. Everything seemed to wear the gloomy tinge of her own vexation, and, like everything she did, turn into a misunderstanding and contrariety.

She had supposed, as a matter of course, that

Bob was to go with her to Boston, as he always acted as her escort; but, as they stood at the pier, waiting for the boat to touch the landing, he drew Guy aside, and she heard him say, in a half whisper, —

“I shall ask you to take my place. I must be at home, I believe.” And then followed a whisper which Lillie could not hear.

She saw Guy start, and Bob make a motion of his hand, as if to stop him, then heard him add, “It may not be true; but I would rather speak to my father at once. It has come to no one’s ears as yet, and I must consult him whether it is best that it should.”

And then the boat had touched the landing.

“Come, Lillie,” said Guy. And Lillie shook hands with Bob, barely touching his hand, and half turning away her head, yet noticing that his face never lost its anxious, preoccupied look; and as the boat slowly steamed away, she told herself, passionately, that it had been one of the most unsatisfactory days of her life. If she could only have looked into Bob’s mind!

He had gone straight home, and into his father’s study, where, pulling the paper from his pocket, he pointed to a paragraph.

"Look there!" he said.

It was but a short sentence, but it only seemed, for that reason, to bring it more vividly before them as a terrible reality. It stated, briefly, that Captain Hawley's ship, the "Meditusa," expected at this port within a few days, had caught fire at sea, from the carelessness of one of the men, and that the captain, with the greater part of the crew, had probably perished. A few of the survivors, escaping in the smaller boat, had been picked up by a ship, just arrived at port, which brought the news, and from them had been learned all the particulars known of the terrible catastrophe. They had deserted the ship too early to know with certainty the fate of those they had left behind, but pieces of the burning wreck had been seen drifting past them, and there could not be a doubt that the unhappy men had perished in the flames or the waters. Still, no particulars of the melancholy disaster could be known with certainty. Then followed the names of the few rescued from the boat. Neither Geoffrey's nor Captain Hawley's was among them.

"Is it best that we should speak of it?" said Bob—he had grown very pale: "it cannot be

certain yet. Had we not better keep it to ourselves?"

Mr. Stanley did not answer for a moment. He had stood leaning heavily on Bob's shoulder during the reading, and now that the story was told.

"I do not believe in concealing anything from your mother," he said, at last. "It must come to her knowledge, sooner or later. Let us go to her at once."

They turned, and left the room together.

CHAPTER XIV.

FROM OVER THE SEA.

"IS it the old German, or his daughter, Arthur, who makes this sketching so attractive, and their company so much to be preferred to ours? Or why is it that we see so little of you lately?"

"Mr. Wohlien is a very agreeable, entertaining person, and talking with him is excellent German practice," said Arthur. "Besides, he is a real artist, and you know my tastes."

"Agreeable? entertaining? Why, I thought him 'crabbed age' itself! Good German practice? Well, perhaps so; but, Arthur, I never knew you so devoted to art before."

"I have never had either the opportunity or the leisure, you must remember, my dear Fanny, or the advantages of such natural beauty before me for sketching."

"I wonder if he means the fair Else, knitting away placidly at her father's blue yarn stocking!" muttered Fanny, as Arthur left the room.

"What are you saying, Fanny?" asked her brother, who had not heard the dialogue between the cousins.

"O, nothing in particular, Jack. I was only wondering whether painters did not generally prefer to make a study of animated nature rather than of empty landscapes."

And then, laughing at Jack's mystified face, Fanny sat down to her desk and scribbled off a home letter for the next steamer.

DEAR ONES AT HOME — Aunty, Bob, any one whom it may concern: This letter is meant for you all; for as Arthur and I are almost the only well ones in this resort of invalids, and as I consider a feminine goose-quill far superior to a masculine, in matters of detail, I take it upon myself to give you the picture of our surroundings, and the bulletin of our invalids.

Here we are in lovely Mentone, a place that is enough in itself, one would think, to cure any illness — blue water in front of our windows that

is a "sight for sair een," and balmy breezes that would heal any ailment. Jimmie is growing daily stronger and happier under the influence of this lovely climate; indeed, I have seen his eyes brighten, and his step strengthen, from the moment we left the east winds behind us. You must keep up your courage, aunty, dear. I feel sure that Jimmie will be back with you, and in his old place at college, almost as soon as Geoffrey is there to meet him; and you will all say he has brought back twice as much of himself as he took away. And Jack — well, I cannot believe that Mentone will cure everybody else, and leave my brother out in the cold; so we hope on together for stronger days, and are glad that Pandora, in that nice old story I used to be so fond of, as a child, left Hope behind at the bottom of her box.

You will wonder what Arthur and I do in this colony of invalids, and whether, with our robust strength, we don't feel like Gulliver among the Lilliputs. Almost everybody else is, or has been, ill, and at first we both felt as if it were rather barbarous for us to go down to the table with appetites unimpaired — having nothing the

matter with us. But we managed to secure a modicum of respect by being at least the nurses of sick people, and I remembered to inquire matutinally for everybody's ailments, keeping my sympathies unblunted by my affection for two of the invalids. Jimmie is getting well enough to enjoy short walks and excursions, and if Jack were only better able to go with us, I should have hardly anything left to wish for.

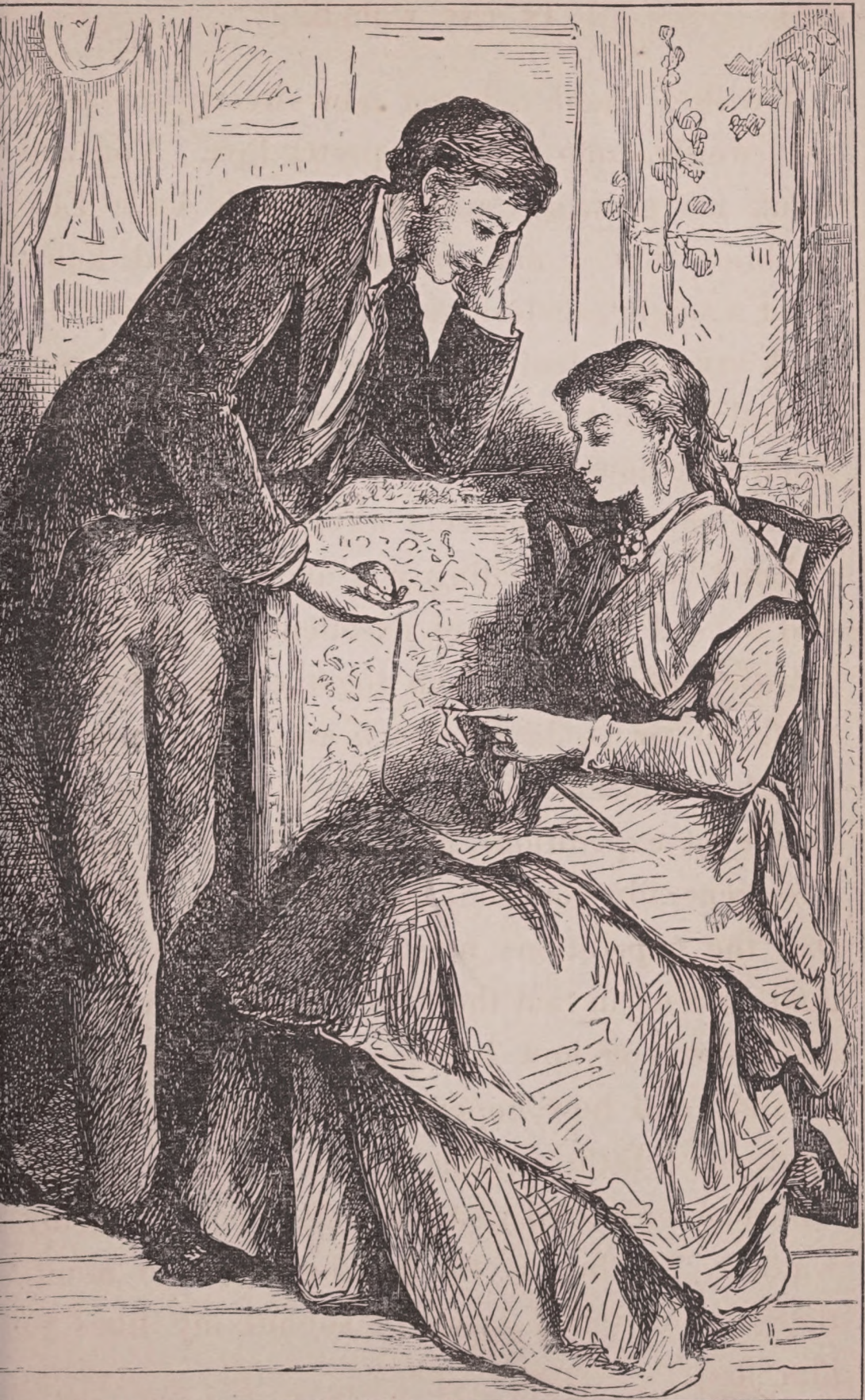
And what does Arthur do? you will ask me. And, as it happens, that brings me to a more particular description of our fellow-boarders. Among the inmates of this house, and frequenters of the *table-d'hôte*, I noticed, as soon as we came here, an old German, with his daughter. He has, I believe, a slight lameness, perhaps a rheumatic affection, and comes here every year for a while. He is an artist, it seems, of considerable repute, and a professor of drawing; poor, I suppose, but a gentleman, a baron, like all Germans! *Arthur says he speaks beautiful German*; and though I cannot help thinking that his rheumatism and his reverses make him irritable, I am interested in him for the sake of his pretty daughter. Such a fresh-faced, simple little German maiden, aunty!

With her blue eyes, and blond braids, and sturdy, sensible little manner, she seems to me like 'Dorothea,' or 'Dora,' or '*Röslein auf der Heide*,' or any heroine of German prose or poetry whom silly romantic I should be apt to fancy her. To crown all, her name is Else, and you will not laugh at me for calling her "Gold Else." I do not think she would thank me for weaving all this halo of sentiment about her, for she is a very practical little body — a plain, straightforward, downright little creature, with a heart full of simplicity, and a temper so sweet that no quick word from her irascible papa has power for a moment to ruffle it. She is perfectly devoted to him, and sits by him for hours together, knitting away at his great blue yarn stockings, while he draws. But you must not fancy her insipid, for she has a character of her own, simple as she is. I liked the honesty and quiet self-respect with which she said, when the old man was telling us once of his wealth and position in by-gone days, and was vexed with her for not seeming to remember, —

"But that was so long ago, papa; you know we have been working people all my days."

I wish I could tell you how sweetly the German words came from her pretty lips. You will think me growing fanciful over this little Else Wohlien, but I am anxious you should know what a simple, undesigning little charmer she is. Jack says, and truly, that she is the last person to find out that she has bewitched us all. You should see how thoughtful and sympathetic she is, in her child-like, innocent way, for my poor boy.

But I began by telling you about Arthur. He and the old Wohlien are excellent friends. The artistic taste draws them together, and the old professor owns, in his *grum* way, that Arthur's talent is considerable. So they go off on long sketching expeditions, and when I say the pretty Else generally goes too, you will think, with me, that the expeditions must have a double charm. And, as I mean that this letter should amuse you, and show you how light-hearted I am over my invalids, and how hopeful you should be, I will send you a little scribble, which I wrote about a tableau I witnessed yesterday afternoon from my window. Arthur is too good-natured to mind, though I certainly mean to submit my lines to him first.



As Fanny's nimble pen reached these words, the door opened, and Arthur came in again.

"What! Back again?" Fanny exclaimed.

"The light is poor to-day."

"O," said Fanny, popping her head out of the window to look at Herr Wohlien, who sat alone, absorbed in his landscape-drawing, "you mean the sun isn't out to-day? Arthur, are you inclined for poetry? Would you like to hear a waif from my muse?"

"Anything you like," said Arthur, smiling, and throwing himself down on the sofa beside her. "What indomitable spirits you have, Fanny!"

"Then don't blame me," said Fanny, with a roguish twinkle in her eyes; and she read, glancing at Arthur from time to time, —

THE END OF STOCKING KNITTING AND GERMAN GRAMMAR IS "THE OLD OLD STORY."

SITS the maiden, deftly knitting,
Bright steel needles quickly flitting
Round the stocking's row;
O'er her, rapt in contemplation
Of her fingers' swift rotation,
Bends a youth we know.

Do we fact for fable see —
Hercules and Omphale

Play anew their part?
Is our gay gallant so *dumpf*?
Has a blue *wollener Strumpf*
Power to charm his heart?

Never think it; though he lingers
Half a lifetime near those fingers,
Stockings he'll ne'er make;
Yet, as he sits heedless there,
Yarn and needles weave a snare
Which he cannot break.

And a myth from classic age
Comes again on modern stage,
With this youth and maid;
Sisters three their powers unite,
Aided by those fingers white,
Ply their fateful trade.

Clotho, Lachesis both fill
Their own parts with wonted skill,
In the web begun.
Atropos, shears thrown aside,
Doth no more the threads divide,
But knots two in one!

Needles take the distaff's place,
Shifting threads soon interlace,
In their magic art.
He, unconscious, sees no trick,
Neither feels the sharp points prick,
Through that ball, his heart.

German verbs, unmoved by fate,
Youth and maiden conjugate;
One leads on the other,
Till he asks, "*Du liebest mich?*"
Falters she, "*Ich liebe dich.*"
Thus they love each other.

"What utter nonsense, Fanny!" said Arthur, laughing outright as Fanny glanced up under her eyelashes at him. "You would certainly take out a patent as Mother Goose's successor!"

"O, then it is mere nonsense—is it?" said Fanny; "and I have your permission to amuse the children at home with it?"

"You have my permission to do anything your madcap spirits set you up to," said Arthur, in the same easy, good-natured tone; but Fanny noticed that the color had risen to his face as she read, and had not even yet disappeared. The letter was finished and sent, but I think the last few lines were rewritten, and the little poem remained in its author's writing-desk. The same steamer brought to our home party a letter from Jimmie, and, as his epistles were a sufficient contrast to Fanny's, I may as well let you see that, too.

DEAR MOTHER: Fanny will have told you, I suppose, what a lovely place we find ourselves in here. It seems as if the air were a real medicine, and took away all aches and pains as one breathed it in. But I must not talk of aches, in connection with myself, for I am too well now to be considered any longer an invalid. So mind and don't have one moment of uneasiness about me, for I am only taking a pleasant little vacation, and shall return to dear old Harvard fresher than before. I have had just enough pain to teach me to feel for it in other people, and when the time comes for me to decide on my work in life, I think I shall say, for that reason, that I will be a doctor. But I am writing too much about myself.

I wish that Mentone would do as much for Jack as it has done for me. I never let Fanny see it, but I am beginning to lose heart when I look at Jack. He seems to grow weaker every day, mother, and his face begins to have that strange, transparent look, as if the soul were looking through. He never utters a word of complaint, but keeps up all his own bright fun and make-believe, even when he seems too feeble

to speak. Fanny tries to think it is all right with him, and is her own merry self, because she thinks he wishes it; but sometimes, when he is not noticing her, I have seen her look at him with an expression as if her very heart would break.

You will think it must be stupid for Arthur in this colony of sick people, and I should sometimes be sorry that I took him away, when there seemed so little need of it, if it were not for the pleasant company he finds here. Fanny has written to you already about the Wohliens, but she has not told you what a friendship is growing up between the professor and Arthur. I feel quite proud when I hear Herr Wohlien, who is rather taciturn, and certainly not given to flattery, praise Arthur's talent for drawing. You know how often we have said that Arthur might be a real artist, if he would only apply himself. Here, with Herr Wohlien for a companion, and Italian scenery for an aid, he is beginning to think so himself, and is quite devoted to his pencil.

Then Else Wohlien, the daughter, is a real sunbeam to Fanny, who must be lonely here sometimes with only us boys for companions. In

fact, Else is a sunbeam to all of us, a girl whom even Bob would like, she is so sensible and sweet. They are going to leave Mentone soon, and return to Heidelberg, where the professor gives lessons. We shall miss them sadly, and Arthur even talks of making a little run on there to see his artist friend at home, while we are recuperating here. I hope he may, for my only uneasiness is lest he should be bored here with us.

But I am writing more than I intended, for Fanny's pen generally exhausts a subject. This is only to carry my love to all at home, and let you know how much I think of you. Tell Geoffrey, who must be with you before this time, how often I lay in my state-room on the steamer, looking up through the little port-hole at the stars, and wondering whether my "better half" could see the same that I saw. It will not be long now before we are all together again. Till then, believe that it is all right with me!

CHAPTER XV.

A SOLDIER AND A HERO.

THE stage was at the door, and Herr Wohlien, with his daughter, was just about to leave Mentone for his home.

As the rosy little German maiden entered the vehicle, she turned, her foot on the step, and held out, in her frank, simple way, her hands to Arthur and Jack.

"*Auf Wiedersehen!*" she said. "We shall meet again soon."

"Soon," said Arthur, with a smile.

"*Auf Wiedersehen!*" echoed Jack. "It may not be soon, *mein Fräulein*, but surely I believe it will be some day!"

Else Wohlien did not notice the words. How should she, with Arthur's lively rattle of talk in her ears? But Jimmie heard and understood the emphasis, and turning, looked at Jack with

sad, questioning eyes. Jack shook his head, with his finger on his lip, and the roguish look in his face; but the words haunted Jimmie all day.

A week passed, and Arthur had left them "for a short journey," as he said.

"To Heidelberg?" asked Fanny, demurely, but with uplifted eyebrows.

"Possibly," returned Arthur, with would-be nonchalance. "One of my old classmates is studying at the University there. I shall find you better, Jack, when I come back again."

"More nearly ready to go home!" said Jack, giving his hand, with a smile.

The beautiful, balmy days passed by, but they did not bring Arthur back, nor did the soft air waft any messages of health and strength to Jack. He grew feebler and feebler. No longer was the pretence kept up between Fanny and himself about "not being able to walk so far *to-day*," "not feeling in the mood for exertion." It was plainly, "I cannot do it."

At length, one evening, when the last gold and crimson rays of the setting sun burnished the still waters, lay like a halo round Jack's head, and transfigured his face, he turned suddenly to

Jimmie, who was alone in the room with him. "I believe it must come, Jimmie, the more that Fanny is not here to listen. I cannot hold it together any longer!"

"What, Jack?" Jimmie asked, with a foreboding of his meaning.

"Why, this poor old shell," said Jack. "Jimmie, do you think I may tell the dear girl? Do you think she can bear it?"

Jimmie had risen, and stood by his cousin's sofa, with a troubled look in his face.

"Why, Jimmie," said Jack, looking up with a radiant smile, "you are never going to wear such a long countenance as that when I get out of prison — are you?"

"I ought not," said Jimmie, turning away his face.

"No, surely not," said Jack, in the same playful tone. "Don't you remember the family rejoicings when Guy came back from his captivity? Isn't my prison a pretty narrow one too, think you?"

Jimmie could not find words to answer just then; so the two sat silent, Jack still holding his cousin's hand, till the golden light had

ebbed away, and the twilight shadows were coming on.

"I'm sorry, Jim, dear," said Jack, at last, "that I should have to leave Fanny to you. Somehow, 'our Jimmie' has always been such a domestic character that we do not seem to have any right to put him into positions of responsibility or anxiety —"

"O, Jack!" said Jimmie, reproachfully, "do you think me unfit for trust?"

"Anything rather; but I cannot bear to make you anxious. Still I thought it best to speak to you at once, rather than run the risk of sending for Arthur unnecessarily."

"Then there is a chance —" Jimmie began.

"No, Jim," said Jack, firmly, "no chance that way. I meant it might be too late. I might not be here."

"You speak as if you were *going home*," said Jimmie; "and, indeed, Jack, I am sure it is nothing more to you! There, I will not be selfish any longer. You may trust me."

"And Fanny," said Jack, pressing Jimmie's hand. "Do you think I may tell her?"

In the darkness, as he spoke, a hand was put

out and laid on his, and a voice said, very quietly, —

“You cannot tell her anything, Jack, that she has not already heard or guessed for herself!”

It was a firm, brave voice; but it sounded to Jimmie as if the tears were only just *dried out* of it, and by a vigorous effort of the will. Jack started, and dropped Jimmie’s hand, groping in the darkness for his sister’s.

“Are you there, Fanny?”

For answer she only laid his head on her shoulder, and sat with her arms clasped round him.

“And you have heard it all, then?” he said, softly. “But you will not mind much, little sister — will you? I know we have been a great deal to each other; so much that I cannot bear to think of the parting; but you will remember — won’t you? — what a poor, useless life mine has been these last few years, and be glad with me that I shall go to a broader, better one.”

“I shall remember,” said Fanny, aloud, “that you have been my helper all my life, Jack, and that I have to thank the years you call so useless for any good there may be in me! I owe you

too much to be wicked enough to think of myself now !”

“Then I must not call them useless years, either, Fanny,” said her brother. “Indeed, I should not have called them wasted, or anything that happened unforeseen.”

“You mean to remind me that I should not call this unforeseen,” Fanny said; “and I will not be selfish, I promise — only let us forget it to-night !”

So they sat on in the darkness, generally silent, but with hands that held each other fast. Then Jack sent them away to bed, telling them how free from pain he felt, and what a peaceful, happy night he should have.

The darkness ebbed away before the bright moonlight, the night was radiant again with a golden glory, and not a sound was heard to tell when the Angel entered the quiet room. But when the morning sun came to waken the sleeping world to new life, one sleeper needed no arousing. A bright soul had escaped from its narrow prison, and Jack had waked at last to his wider work !

“I feel happier so, Jimmie,” Fanny said, as the cousins stood together by the grave on the lovely Mentone shore. “It seems so like Jack to lie just where he fell. No, I hardly mean that; but I think our dear boy would have been better pleased to have me show how little I thought of *this* as himself,—how sure I should be that he was always with me, whether his grave were here or at home.”

Fanny always spoke as if Jack were with her still, and as if all his wishes were known to her, as much as when he had spoken them himself. “He would not wish to have anything but his name on the little stone, Jimmie,” she said; “so I will not say what I should like.”

But, when she went to lay her farewell flowers on the grave which was so far from being all that was left of Jack, she found it as she had wished. On the little headstone were carved the sword and laurel crown she had longed to lay there, and, beneath the name, her own words, —

“A soldier in life’s battle-field,

A hero in the strife!”

CHAPTER XVI.

ARTHUR STANDS ON HIS OWN FEET AT LAST.

IT has been truly said that we are seldom placed in emergencies for which we are unfitted, the needful strength having often only awaited this very discipline to call it forth. So Jimmie, shielded and sheltered as his life had always been, found, when left alone in a foreign land, with his cousin dependent on his support and consolation, the very active energy and cheerfulness which the occasion required, and which his shrinking, studious life had, hitherto, so little developed.

But Fanny was not one of the people who become, in their bereavement, a "dead weight," crushing their friends with the hopeless melancholy of their words and looks. Strong in the belief that her dear brother was with her still, and that the journey home he had taken so hap-

pily was no wide gulf of separation, Fanny was her own brave self, her lively spirits only tempered with a gentler sweetness, like that which had come over Jack himself, when, full of fresh courage and hopefulness, he had been preparing for the war.

Arthur had not come back to Mentone. Indeed, they had only just written to him of Jack's death.

"We will go to Heidelberg to join him, Jimmie," Fanny said. "You are all ready for home, now, and I have no reason for lingering here. Let us go to Arthur as soon as possible."

And so, in the early September days, they turned their backs on the Italian town which the memory of that golden evening and that little marble slab would make so dear to them, and went to Heidelberg.

"Mr. Stanley was no longer there," they were told at the hotel, from which Arthur's letters had been written, though, indeed, weeks had passed since they had heard from him. "He had gone away some time since."

Whither was not so easily ascertained. Mr. Stanley had been to the hotel once or twice to inquire for letters, but had left no address.

"Might not Herr Wohlien know of his whereabouts?" Jimmie had suggested; and that seeming the most feasible method of discovery, Jimmie had inquired the locality of the professor's house, and set out at once.

The house — a modest-looking little dwelling — was easily found, but the inmates were all away. "The Herr Professor was giving lessons, the Fräulein was gone for a walk — very likely Herr Stanley had accompanied her."

Thus much, in the lowest of German dialects, Jimmie obtained from the smiling, broad-faced old woman who opened the door; and, sorely puzzled with the mystery of Arthur's being there, Jimmie retraced his steps to the hotel. As he was turning the corner, however, he came full upon Arthur himself: nor was he alone, for by his side walked the fresh-faced little maiden Else, and both were talking so earnestly that they had almost passed Jimmie unrecognized. But Else, chancing to look up, caught his eye, and sprang, with outstretched hands, to welcome him.

"Are you here? Herr Stanley, look! It is your brother."

It might have been fancy, but Jimmie thought

that there was some confusion and embarrassment in Arthur's greeting. It might have been only that Else's welcome was so cordial, and her eagerness for news of Fanny so genuine, that Arthur's manner seemed, by comparison, somewhat forced and constrained.

"And Fanny is here with you, of course?" he said. "Poor girl! I have only just got your note, Jim."

"And you will go to her immediately, Herr Stanley!" Else exclaimed, the tears springing to her blue eyes at the allusion to Jack. "And tell her how much I think of her, and love her, and how soon I shall come to see her and tell her of my sympathy."

All this Else had said in her unaffected, simple fashion, the German words having actually a *home sound* to Jimmie from the cordial affection and feeling in the tone.

"Go, Herr Stanley — we shall not look for you at tea," she repeated; and then, with her pretty little "*Auf Wiedersehen!*" she had gone into the modest little house, and Arthur and Jimmie had turned towards the hotel.

At first the constraint of their meeting seemed

still to hang about Arthur, as if he hardly knew how to begin the conversation; and it was only after some minutes that he said, —

“I scarcely expected you to come to Heidelberg for me, Jimmie. I meant to have gone to you. I suppose poor Fanny is quite crushed by losing Jack?”

“O, no,” said Jimmie, earnestly; “she cannot be, because she feels so little that she has lost him. She is so brave and bright, Arthur, that I never can wonder at her enough. We came to Heidelberg because she wished it. I am well, and ready, as she says, to go home, and she did not think it right to linger longer at Mentone. So, as you did not come to us, we came to join you.”

“And you were surprised at not finding me at the hotel?” Arthur asked, with the slight conscious flush rising in his face.

“Yes. You are at the Wohliens’, you say?”

The answer was not given till they were in Fanny’s presence.

“You are at the Wohliens’?” Jimmie repeated, when Arthur had said to Fanny what, in his affection for, and sympathy with his favorite cousin, he knew so well how to say.

"Why, yes," said Arthur, averting his eyes; "I found it so dreary at the hotel. There is something friendly and home-like about their little house; then I am drawing with the professor. Besides, I find the household life the very best school for learning to speak German."

Fanny did not answer aloud, but her eyes twinkled mischievously, and Jimmie heard her whisper under her breath, "Hamilton and Hildgarde!"

"You will hardly find it worth while to come back here for the few days of our stay," she said, when Arthur rose. "I am anxious, of course, to get home soon, now that they miss me so much more,"—a stifled sigh;—"and you will, of course, go with us?"

"Yes; O, of course," said Arthur, rather absently; and the messages of love to Else with which Fanny commissioned him seemed likely to fall short of their destination.

Else, however, fulfilled her promise of coming in person to Fanny, and appeared with the morning like one of the sunbeams to which Jimmie had likened her.

A woman's sympathy is, after all, the most

soothing balm to a woman ; and Fanny, left alone with her boy cousins in this foreign country, felt the first touch of home when this little German maiden, with arms clasped round her, and tears welling up in her blue eyes as she spoke, told her of her sorrow for her loss.

"Ah ! I thought so little," Else said, "I thought so little, when I told him we should soon meet again, what a long time it might be ! But you have him safe there —"

"Yes, always," Fanny answered, smiling brightly through her tears. "But tell me about yourself, Else. What are you doing?"

"O, it was the same old thing always. Papa had his drawing-classes from morning till night, and she — O, she kept house with Lieschen, or gave her little lessons too ; only small helps, of course, but it was so good to be able to do something !"

And Else's face was as cloudless as the sky in saying it.

"And my cousin Arthur has been staying at your house?"

"Yes." The color slowly deepened in Else's cheeks. "Herr Arthur was very good. They

had always wished to let one room, and his company was so dear to papa. Then he was teaching her English. Who knows but she might one day be able to give lessons in that?"

"But it takes a long time to learn English," said Fanny, laughing. "You must be a very apt student, Else, if you learn to speak English fluently before Arthur goes."

And then the bright, sunny smile had faded away, and Else had gone home, looking more grave than was her wont.

The stay at Heidelberg proved longer than the travellers had proposed. "There seemed to be a charm about the place," Jimmie said, with a smile. Yet, though this charm must surely have been the presence of the Wohliens, why did Fanny never leave their house without looking grave and troubled? Well, there was a little secret uneasiness in Fanny's mind, and when she had been watching Arthur and Else together, it generally showed itself in her face.

Fanny was neither over-romantic nor unduly fanciful; but when she had watched the two bending together over their English books, noted Arthur's attention to the girl, and her unconscious

joyousness in his presence, was it any wonder that Fanny should question whether all this sunshine would not be dimmed when the presence was withdrawn?

"I am afraid it is getting too earnest," she said to herself. "There is nothing of the flirt about Else, but Arthur—O, dear! I am afraid it has been play with him all through a lifetime."

"What has Arthur been doing with himself here, Else?" she said, one day. "You can tell us all about him, if he has been at your house."

"O," said Else, hesitating, "how can I tell? It is as papa says; he makes the house bright and pleasant, and for the rest—he amuses himself, I suppose!"

The answer was too much in accordance with Fanny's own thoughts to pass wholly unnoticed.

"He always does that," she said, as her companion raised her eyes to her face. "I should like to hear something more earnest about him for once."

"You are finding fault with Herr Stanley," said Else, timidly; "it is true he is not all he

might be. O, forgive me! I had forgotten — he is your cousin.”

“No matter for that, Else,” said Fanny, smiling. “Speak out. What is it? I know my cousin very thoroughly myself. Now tell me your opinion. You say he is not all he might be.”

“I sometimes think so,” said Else, with downcast eyes. “It depends so much on whom he is with. But I am too frank. Don’t ask me to speak, dear Fräulein Fanny. Herr Arthur is so good and kind at heart, that he might be anything he chose; that is all. But tell me: is he never in earnest, then, in what he does and says?”

“Not enough so,” said Fanny, shaking her head. But she was sorry, a few moments after, that she had answered so, for Else looked grave and abstracted during the rest of her stay, and her very step, as Fanny watched her going away, seemed to have lost its spring.

For a few days after, it almost seemed as if she avoided Arthur. If he came into the room during Fanny’s visits, Else would find some excuse for leaving the cousins together; if he appeared

at the hotel during her own calls, she would have some errand elsewhere. In her own home she was generally absorbed, nowadays, in household matters, which left little time for reading or studying English. And, withal, she had lost the sunshine out of her voice and eye.

As for Arthur, he was often so moody and distraught, that Fanny at last resolved to speak of it. These two cousins had always kept up their odd cronyship, rallying one another in the old, bantering way on the foibles of each, and sometimes dropping in a solid word of advice amid all the froth of fun.

"You are not so happy as Jimmie at the idea of going home, Arthur," she began.

"No? Why, I thought I was ready. Why, indeed, should I dawdle here any longer? I am doing no good."

"Nor any harm?" said Fanny, with a quick glance.

He shrugged his shoulders. "No harm, so far as I know. I am always on the negative side, you know, Fanny — neither one thing nor the other."

"You should be ashamed to own it, then," said

Fanny, with spirit. "Rouse up, Arthur! Go home, and be something at last. It is time to be in earnest now."

"I wish I were sure that I was not," muttered Arthur, with a sort of sigh.

"What is the matter?" said Fanny, turning at the sound. "You don't look happy, Arthur. Are you so?"

"Anything but it," said Arthur, with another shrug. "Why, my dear Fanny, I am positively wretched, at times."

Fanny looked at him in silence for a minute, then crossed the room, and standing beside him, said, bravely, —

"You will be wretched, Arthur, just so long as you don't know your own mind. You will be wretched while you trifle so with life, and make others miserable that you may be amused for an hour. You will get rid of your wretchedness just so soon as you make up your mind to a brave, straightforward, manly course. Let me advise you, for once. Be a man; take your resolution, and go home to your work."

"I will," said Arthur, shaking her hand heartily. "You are a good adviser, Fanny."

He went straightway from the room, and Fanny, feeling a little frightened at her own daring, was sure that he had understood her meaning.

And now preparations for departure were made in earnest, and nothing was heard but talk of home. Evidently Fanny's words had taken effect, for, though Arthur said nothing more, his very air had in it a resolution as if he were done with the dawdling, loitering life he had been leading in Heidelberg. Their passage had been engaged on board the German steamer from Bremen, and the last evening before their departure had come. Fanny had walked over to Else Wohlien's little house for a last talk with her friend. Of late, Else had rather avoided them, she fancied, and had required to be sought, instead of coming to them early and late, as she used.

As Fanny neared the house, she saw through the window, which stood open, Else and Arthur standing in the back part of the room. His back was turned to the street, but by his gestures Fanny could see how earnestly he was speaking. Else's head was bent down, but Fanny fancied, even in the half-light of the room, that she saw

tears on her cheek. Neither saw her, or heard her approach, till she stood on the threshold of the room. Then Arthur started, dropped Else's hand, which he had held, and, hurrying past Fanny with barely a word, left the room.

"Else," said Fanny, impulsively, going up to her friend, "what is the matter? You are crying."

"Not now," said Else, wiping away her tears, and looking up, with a smile. "Is it any wonder that I cry, when I think that I shall not see you after to-day?"

"You should rather say you are crying because you ever saw us at all," said Fanny, vehemently, speaking more in reply to her own thoughts than to Else's words.

"It would not be true," said the little maiden, resolutely. "No, dear Fräulein, I am not selfish enough to say that. If I may not have happiness always, I am at least grateful for what I have had, and never sorrowful that I have seen you."

And Fanny would not say any more of the indignation that filled her heart whenever she thought of Arthur, and the cloud he was bringing

over a brave, bright little soul — and for what? That he might “amuse himself.”

As she left the house, Arthur's chamber door shut, and he came hurrying after her.

“Let me walk with you, Fanny. It is growing dusk.”

“There is no need to trouble you,” she said, walking faster; “I can go quite well alone.”

But he caught up with her, and drew her arm through his own.

“Have I offended you in any way, Fanny, that you want to be rid of my company?”

“You have done more, Arthur,” said Fanny, speaking in her old, impulsive fashion. “The man who is so far gone in selfishness that he has no thought for the feelings of other people, and can trifle to the last with a heart he is not worthy to fill a corner of, has something more than my passing indignation.”

“You are very hard on me, Fanny,” said Arthur, coloring. “Remember, you have never heard me plead my cause.”

“I have no need to *hear*,” said Fanny; “I have seen for myself.”

“Then you condemn me utterly,” said Arthur,

"and despise me accordingly? You should have more charity, Fanny. I should not need to remind you of the stumbling-blocks in my way."

"I should not need to remind *you*, Arthur," said Fanny, sorrowfully, "that, with an honorable man, a stumbling-block which proves no obstacle to trifling should not be considered for a moment. Despise you, Arthur? No, I can't do that yet; but I am grieved and disappointed more than I can tell you. There, let me go in alone, and try to forget it."

And Fanny, with tears in her eyes, hurried up the hotel stairs to her room. Arthur remained standing in the street, just where she had left him, for a few minutes, his head bent down, his eyes fixed on the ground, as if in irresolution. Suddenly he turned with an air of determination, and walked firmly and quickly towards the house he had just left.

It might have been an hour later that the door of the little parlor at the hotel was opened quickly, and Arthur came in. Jimmie was in his room, busy over the finishing touches to his trunk, and Fanny was sitting alone in the twilight. Arthur came up to her chair, and touched her shoulder.

"Fanny," said he, abruptly, "I am not going with you to-morrow. I shall stay in Heidelberg."

"Not going with us? But, Arthur, your passage is engaged."

"No longer. I have been to see my friend Lindsay, who has been giving English lessons at the university, and who has been meaning, as I knew, to make a tour home this autumn. It is all settled. I take his place, he mine."

"But, Arthur," said Fanny, only half understanding, "what is the meaning of it?"

"The meaning is," said Arthur, "that I am in earnest, at last. Yes, Fanny," as she looked up in astonishment, "you have made me ashamed of myself, at length. I am in earnest, for once, and for some one beside myself."

"Do you really mean —" Fanny began.

"I really mean," said the young man, "that I am in love. I really mean that Else has told me she can love me, and I really think that, with such a noble, generous little soul to care for me and keep me straight, I shall be worthy all you can say of me, Fanny, if I cannot make some sacrifice to deserve what I have won."

Fanny fairly sprung from her chair.

"Then, Arthur, I beg your pardon a thousand times for all I have said and thought of you. But I could not believe it of you, that you would trifle in such a matter, and with such a girl! Then you are really going to stay here, and work and wait for her?"

"Yes," said Arthur, smiling. "Don't look as if you thought it such a sudden thing, Fanny. I have been making up my mind for days between being a man and a selfish brute, and your words only gave me the impulse I should have got for myself by to-morrow."

"It is a great risk," said Fanny. She had begun to look grave now. "Don't be hurt, Arthur; but it is so easy to mistake impulses for emotions, and this will be such a new thing for you."

"Yes," said Arthur, "it is a new thing, I know, for me to be thinking, planning, and working for any one but myself. But, Fanny, on the other hand, it is a new thing for me to have a real, deep, earnest feeling for any one! I am not mistaken; you need not fear me. I love Else, and sacrifice for her will be no sacrifice. Don't be afraid, Fanny; it is no sudden impulse.

You may believe that it will be the saving of me."

Strange as it was to hear such words from Arthur, Fanny could not look at him, as he spoke, without feeling, and feeling thankfully, how true his words were.

"I do believe you, Arthur," she said, giving him her hand, "and I am heartily glad for you. The more you say, the more I respect you for your resolve, hard as I may think it will be for you. O, Arthur, you have a treasure in Else."

"I hope I may deserve her," said Arthur, with feeling. "I have decided to stay and work here, Fanny, rather than at home, because I feel how much more heartily I can work for my new purpose, where there is nothing to remind me of my old self, not to speak of our being spared the separation. You may think of me, then, giving English lessons and drawing lessons, and hoping that I may not turn out a second Jacob, and have to wait seven years for my Rachel."

"God speed you, then, dear Arthur," Fanny said, heartily. "You may be sure that my sympathy will be with you both."

"And you will make my peace at home?" said Arthur, with a smile.

"I shall leave that to Jimmie," said Fanny, turning to her younger cousin, who had just entered the room. "I am sure no word of mine will be needed while you have him to plead your cause."

Truly, "we know not what a day may bring forth;" and Fanny had never imagined, twenty-four hours before, that her parting words to Else would be spoken to Arthur's betrothed.

"Yes, I love him and trust him," Else said, looking straight into Fanny's face, with a happy light in her eyes. "Dear Fräulein, you need not fear for us. I know all you can tell me of him; but I believe, O, I *do* believe, that he only needs to have some one to think of and care for, to become all he might be. It is only so strange to think that I should be that some one! You will all blame me; I am sure of it; but—"

"We shall all thank you, Else," said Fanny, kissing her.

And so the two cousins set out on their homeward journey, leaving Arthur to work out his way in the new world in which he had chosen his place. But, however strange this new life might seem to them, they had no fears for him in it.

They felt sure of what I wish that you, too, should know, — that this first pure, deep, earnest feeling of Arthur's would be his saviour, and help him walk firmly, and stand upright, where for so long he had wavered, and leaned on others.

CHAPTER XVII.

LILLIE IN A NEW LIGHT.

THE summer days had worn by slowly and heavily to those at home, for no morning dawned when the thought did not awake with them, "Will not our Geoffrey come back to us to-day?" and no evening wore to its close without the heavy feeling of disappointed hope, "He will not come to-night!" "For I cannot give him up," Mr. Stanley had said. "I may be wrong in feeling so, but I cannot think of our bright boy lying in a watery grave!" Little Lillie firmly believed that her father's forebodings were founded on fact, and this saying of his gave her almost as much confidence as if she had been told that her brother was not drowned. And, while they waited and hoped, the summer slipped away.

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Lillie Dalton had not come back to Rockedge again, nor, indeed, had her letters told them much of her life at Newport. Short and unsatisfactory, scarcely more than messages of love to Sue and the children, they would have known little enough about her if it had not been for a long epistle from Mrs. Melville, who took fitful interest in her nephew and his surroundings, and wrote, from time to time, letters long enough to bridge over the periods of silence. One passage in this letter attracted unusual attention.

"I cannot close my letter, dear Guy, without giving you at least a hint of something which is more than a report in our circles at present, and which will have the same interest — and I hope the same *delightful* interest — for you, as for myself. Matrimonial gossips say (and I do not contradict them) that our dear Lillie is about to be engaged to Mr. Stephen Lenox, who has been, for the last two years, one of the most prominent young men in New York society. You are so well acquainted with him as a friend of Arthur, that I need say no more about him; but you will, I know, share my pleasure that Lillie should have made such a conquest, and have such a brilliant

future before her. But mind! — not a word of this to her; the engagement is not ‘out,’ only ‘understood,’ and girls are so sensitive on these points that I should never hope for forgiveness from Lillie, did she suspect I had betrayed her to you.”

“Well?” said Guy, looking at Bob, interrogatively, as he finished reading the letter, which had been a subject of much conversation throughout the day.

“Well,” was all Bob’s reply, as he slowly folded the letter, and laid it on the table.

“I should like to be able to dismiss the matter as quietly, Bob,” went on Guy, when a minute had passed without Bob’s adding another word. “There are few things I would not prefer for Lillie to seeing her the wife of a young man like Stephen Lenox — a mere worldling, with neither principles nor intellect to gain him respect. There is nothing I dread so much for Lillie as a marriage with a man she cannot honor.”

“You believe it, then?” said Bob, looking up at last from the table, where he seemed to be still considering the letter.

“I would gladly do anything else,” said Guy,

with a gesture of annoyance; "but I am afraid there is too much truth in it. My aunt has always had a great deal of influence over Lillie, as you know, and I am afraid her precepts have sometimes fallen into very receptive soil."

The two friends stood for a moment silent, Bob with his eyes again on the ground, Guy watching him with a scrutinizing expression.

"If it were true," he said at last, "I should say I had been disappointed in my lifelong idea of Lillie. But, indeed," — coloring, as his eyes met Guy's, — "disappointments are not such rare things in life, after all —"

"And, therefore, better prepared for in time, Bob," said his friend, holding out his hand.

"Perhaps — undoubtedly," was Bob's answer; but the mutual heartiness with which the two grasped each other's hand, showed how plainly each understood and sympathized with the other.

That was all that was said between them about the matter; and if, in secret, Bob found it necessary to discipline some wishes of his, and to prepare for storms of disappointment by "reefing" some very bright hopes he had hardly known before were hidden in his heart, no one was the

wiser for it but himself. We all know that, as life goes on, and we step forth more and more boldly on the path that leads us out into the world, many of our air-castles are rudely thrown down, and many a cherished idol falls, broken, from the pedestal where we had so fondly placed it! It was a lesson in life Bob Stanley had learned early.

Meantime, October had come round again, with its many-colored coat of gold, and crimson, and russet brown, and Bob was back in Cambridge, studying hard for the work in life he had chosen.

"Earnestness in seeking the truth, and courage in speaking it," Mr. Stanley had said, smiling. "If you set out with those weapons in your armory, you can afford to let popularity give you the slip."

"It will be a long time before I need trouble myself about that," Bob had returned; "and, indeed, the *seeking* is all I need think of as yet."

An earnest seeker after truth Bob certainly was, and those who do their part as he did, preach, perforce, as they go.

With the cooler weather the home party had begun to look for their travellers, and all eyes

brightened as they looked at the empty places so soon to be filled.

It is true that one place would never be filled again — their letters had already told them that; but so large a portion of Fanny's bright, trusting faith had found its way across the sea in her letters, that all felt, with her, that cousin Jack's place among them was not empty, even though he was not there in person to fill it; for was he not, after all, with them as much here as across the sea, and always with those who had loved him, wherever they might be?

"I wish some one could go on to New York to meet poor Fanny," old Mr. Osborne said one evening; "it seems so dreary and desolate for her, poor girl, coming back to home scenes without the person who has always shared them with her."

"She has Arthur and Jimmie with her, you know, grandpapa," Sue said.

"Yes, yes," said the old gentleman, impatiently; "but some one fresh from home, I mean. And Jimmie, too; I think we have been wrong in never writing to him about Geoffrey. Some one should be there to say a word before he comes home."

Mr. Osborne had grown much older — *broken* very much, as people say — during this last summer. Anxiety about Geoffrey, and now grief for his oldest grandson, had had their effect upon him, and made his wishes, when they were expressed, almost a law to his family.

So Sue had said, soothingly, "Well, sir, we must try if it can be arranged."

"I hardly know whom we can find to go, Sue," Mr. Osborne said, dejectedly. "Your uncle Arthur is always so absorbed in his parish; Guy has gone off on his western trip; and Charley is too busy with college to be called off even if he were not the last person in the world to prepare any one for bad news — though, indeed, poor boy! he has had something now to tone down his spirits a little. We must give it up, Sue; they are all too busy, except me, and I'm too old to be of any use!"

"Except to a good many people here at home, sir," said Sue, cheerily; for Sue Osborne, in changing her name, had never changed her nature, and still thoroughly believed in bright words, thoughts, and looks. "Why should not Bob go? A few days' absence would not matter so much to him."

And Bob, being consulted on the expediency of his going to New York to meet the travellers, consented at once, and went.

He had not been in New York since his visit of the winter before, and, from the moment of his stepping from the train in the depot, his thoughts had gone back to that time. The steamer had not yet got in, and, as waiting and expecting is always wearisome work, and uncertainty an unsettling state, Bob did not find it as easy to control his thoughts as at other times. In the afternoon, when he strolled through the familiar streets, he found himself back again, in fancy, to the bright winter walks and morning chats with Lillie. He found himself going over in memory what he had said, and how she had looked and replied, — a recollection both pleasing and disappointing, — and at last he found himself turning down the street which had so often been the goal of his morning strolls.

Autumn though it was, but few of the summer birds had come back to their city quarters, and the greater part of the houses looked, with their closed shutters and blank windows, lifeless and deserted. Bob glanced up at Mrs. Melville's

house as he passed, expecting to see it as dreary-looking as the rest. So it was, if dust on the blinds and window-sills were the sign of desertion; and Bob would have gone by without a thought of its being tenanted, had not his eye chanced to fall on a window in one of the upper stories. The blind there was unclosed, and there was a little peep of the rose-colored curtains he remembered to have heard Lillie specify in describing the furnishings of her ideal boudoir.

With an impulse which he was almost disposed himself to laugh at, Bob ran up the steps, and rang the bell. Steps were heard in answer to the summons; but there was nothing surprising in that, as the house was always kept open, its busy master seldom following his wife in her gay summer flittings. The door was quickly opened, and one of the servants looked out, as if to see who was there, before admitting a guest. The woman had an anxious, agitated air, and her eyes were red with crying.

"The family are not in town, I suppose?" Bob said, struck at once by the woman's manner. "Mrs. Melville and Miss Dalton, I mean."

"O, but they are, indeed, sir," said the woman,

speaking in the same hurried, fluttered way. "But I hardly know whether Mrs. Melville is able — But walk in, Mr. Stanley. I'll ask, at any rate, if Miss Lillie can see you."

Bob followed the servant silently up stairs, and into the great parlor, whose furniture was still swathed in its brown holland coverings. The doors on the story were all closed, and everything had a chill, dreary, dead look, so at variance with the house whose life had always before seemed to Bob so gay and animated, that he began, insensibly, to feel as if something had happened.

"Perhaps," he said, pausing on the threshold, — "perhaps the family are but just arrived; perhaps they are not ready to see any one?"

"O, I don't know, Mr. Stanley," said the woman, wringing her hands; "we are all in such a state here I hardly know what to do. I'll go and ask Miss Lillie if she can see you."

For a few minutes after she disappeared, Bob walked to and fro in the long parlor, feeling anxious and bewildered, without knowing why. What could have happened? And, as he slowly paced the room, picturing all sorts of possibili-

ties, a door at the other end of the room shut, and a voice exclaimed, —

“O, Bob! Is it really you?”

Bob turned at the sound of his name, and met Lillie, who came hurrying towards him, her hands held out. She was very pale; her eyes looked swollen and sleepless, and her whole manner and appearance showed so plainly distress and agitation, that Bob’s anxiety was confirmed.

“Lillie,” he exclaimed, holding her hands, “what is it?”

“O,” said Lillie, “I could not have believed it was you, Bob! O, you don’t know how I have wanted to see some one from home, — I felt so much alone, and so far away from you all!”

“But, Lillie,” said Bob, looking at her in distress, as the tears rolled down her cheeks, “What is the matter? What has happened?”

“It is no wonder you ask,” said Lillie, trying to smile, as she wiped away her tears; “you must not suppose I have been like this all the time. It is only because there has been nobody but me, and it seems so good to have some one at last to speak to about our trouble, that I cry!”

Bob waited till Lillie should tell him what this

trouble was, fully realizing the force of her need for sympathy.

"But I am forgetting that you know nothing about this trouble," she said at last. "It seems as if it had happened so long ago that I cannot realize how few days ago it really was, — it has been such a shock to us! We were at Newport, Bob, intending to leave for home in a few days, when a letter came from uncle Henry, saying that he wished us to return immediately. He has been very little with us this summer; but whenever he was, I noticed how strange and unlike himself he seemed, as if there were something that troubled him, and aunt Bella seemed irritated sometimes, because he told her she was spending too much money at Newport. Still I did not suspect anything till we got home, and then — O, Bob, uncle Henry has failed, and lost everything! I don't know how it has all happened, but he had engaged very largely in speculations, and there has been a complete crash. People talk about dishonesty; and he says he is disgraced forever; and you can't think how wretched we all are!"

"But Guy knows nothing of it all," said Bob,

catching at the statement as if it had been a ray of hope.

"No; how should he? He is away at the west, you know; and uncle Henry has kept it very much to himself, in spite of his anxiety and trouble. It is a great surprise to people. O, Bob, you can't think how changed and broken he is!"

"And your aunt, Lillie?"

"That is almost the worst part, and it is on her account that I have to be so quiet through it all — so different from what I am now!" — with a smile.

"When uncle Henry told her, she fell at once into the most dreadful state, going from one fit of hysterics to another, and overwhelming him with reproaches whenever she could speak. It has seemed like a horrid dream, Bob — as if it had lasted all my life! The servants have all left us, except the one woman you saw. They all came down on uncle Henry for their money the moment a word of it was breathed, and the house is so still and desolate that it seems as if I were the only person in it!"

"Poor Lillie!" said Bob. "It is so hard for you to have such trouble!"

"Yes, is it not? But it has been so much, Bob, that I feel as if I could never be again the little silly, giddy thing I was before it. When I think of poor uncle Henry so wretched and harassed, and aunt Bella so unlike herself, I feel as if my whole life were changed, and I grown years older."

"But, Lillie, dear," said Bob, forgetting all about the Newport belle, and the years that had passed since he and Lillie were boy and girl together, "you know this is not to be your life; you know you have your own home, and all of us to go to."

"Yes," said Lillie, wiping away her tears again; "but I must not leave them here while things are so. You know uncle Henry cannot keep this house, and I am afraid it will kill aunt Bella; she would think there was no use in living without money, and carriages, and a fine house. I cannot leave her so."

"Cannot I do anything for you, Lillie? Would it be of any use for me to see your uncle or aunt?"

"O, no, indeed. I do not know where uncle Henry is. He is shut up in his study with strange men, or out of the house all day; and aunt Bella

sends for me a dozen times in a morning to ask if the blinds are all closed. No one must know we are in town. I should feel actually like a bat, Bob, if I did not let one little gleam of sunshine into my room."

Lillie's sad little smile went right to Bob's heart!

"But, Lillie," he said, holding her hand, "you must not forget to take care of yourself in all this trouble. You are looking as ill as when I cured your pale cheeks for you last winter."

"I have a better reason for it, at least," said Lillie, smiling. "But, Bob, I have been too glad to see you to ask how you happened to come, and why you are in New York."

Bob told of the expected arrival of the travellers, and of the chance nature of his call at the house.

"Then I am more glad than ever for the little crack in my blinds," said Lillie, "if it lets in something more than sunshine! Ah, I should like so much to see Fanny! but you must not say anything to her, Bob. You say this is not my trouble, but it is, for the time being; and for uncle Henry's sake I am as unwilling to see peo-

ple as aunt Bella. Hark ! I hear her calling. I must go."

A sharp voice called from the room above. How different from the smooth accents Bob had always heard from Mrs. Melville !

"But you will let me telegraph for Guy?" he said, detaining Lillie for a moment. "You should not keep it from him, Lillie ; it is not right that you should be left so alone !"

"Yes," said Lillie, "I think I may send for him. It is no use to ask uncle Henry anything while he is so harassed and driven ; but you will do as you think best. There, I must go ! Try to come again, Bob, if you can find a moment for me. Good by !"

And the little figure vanished up the stairs, summoned once and again by the irritable voice, sounding as if it were ready to break into tears and reproaches.

Bob, as he slowly wended his way back to the hotel, after despatching a summons to Guy, asked himself if that could really be the Lillie he had seen swallowed up in frivolity but a few short months ago.

The steamer did not get in that night, and he

was haunted all the evening by the sad, sweet little face, and the thought of the patient, willing nurse, so ready to take her untried share of suffering and responsibility.

It was actually not until his thoughts had almost become dreams that Bob suddenly remembered, with a start, that Lillie was not so much alone through all this as he had fancied. Where, then, was Steve Lenox? Was it possible that Lillie had not told her betrothed of her trouble?

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

SWIFTLY as telegraphic messages travel, Guy could not reach New York before two or three days, at soonest, and Bob was loath indeed to go away before he had seen Lillie with some adviser and friend in her loneliness. In the early morning call which his disturbed dreams of the gloomy house and its forlorn little tenant made so natural, Mr. Melville had suddenly entered the parlor while they were talking together. Lillie might well have said he was changed. Bob thought, as he looked at his haggard, care-worn face, that he should hardly have recognized him for the prosperous, pompous merchant of a year ago.

He had drawn back as quickly as he had entered, at sight of the unexpected visitor sitting with his niece, as if the faces of his fellow-beings were the last objects he wished to look upon.

"Don't go, uncle Henry," said Lillie; "it is only Bob Stanley."

And Mr. Melville had come forward in a lost, absent sort of way, and shaken hands as if he scarcely remembered who the guest was. But, as he went down the stairs, Bob heard his name, and, looking up, saw that the study door was open, and that Mr. Melville had called him.

"Did you wish to speak to me, sir?"

"Ah, Bob," said Mr. Melville, carefully closing the door behind the visitor, "this is a sad business! I little thought, a year ago, that I should ever call myself a ruined bankrupt; but there is no telling where extravagance may not bring us. Your brother was a lucky fellow to get out of the house in time."

Hardly knowing what to answer, Bob stood for a moment irresolute and embarrassed; but seeing that Mr. Melville had sunk back in his arm-chair, with his hands raised to his forehead, he spoke.

"I took the liberty of telegraphing for Guy Dalton, sir. It seemed hard for Lillie to be here quite alone."

"True, true," said Mr. Melville, in the same abstracted tone. "Poor girl! she has behaved

beautifully through it. I'm glad she has her money safely invested. It is well Guy saw to that. Did you say you had sent for him?"

"Yes, sir."

"Ah! it is as well, perhaps," said Mr. Melville, with a sigh. "It is hard for Lillie, as you say. Guy can take her home, at least. She will not have a home with us any longer. But he must leave her with us for a little, Bob. I fear this will be Bella's death-blow, and she was always fond of the child."

Bob found the sight of Mr. Melville in this depressed, altered state so sad a one, that he could only wonder at Lillie's self-control in his presence. As Mr. Melville said no more, and seemed to have forgotten his existence, he said, at last, —

"I hope you will send for me, sir, if I can be of the slightest use. I am in town, waiting for the arrival of the 'City of Hamburg.'"

"Thank you," said Mr. Melville, absently. "I wish there were the slightest chance of my calling upon you."

And Bob went down the stairs thinking much more of the change in the house and its mas-

ter, than of the arrival of the travellers. The steamer, however, got in that afternoon, and found him standing on the wharf, hat in hand, ready to wave them a welcome, his heart beating with the pleasurable excitement which anticipation of a meeting with friends must always cause.

Yes, there was Fanny standing on the deck, and Jimmie beside her, looking, as he had so cheerily predicted, "twice himself." But where was Arthur? The question was repeated when, some minutes later, he was shaking hands with Fanny and his brother.

"Why," said Fanny, with a twinkle of amusement in her eye, "there hangs a tale thereby, Bob. Arthur has staid behind in Heidelberg. Arthur has entered on his walk in life, at last; and, as it happens, it lies on the other side of the sea."

And then, as Bob looked, puzzled, from one to the other, the story of Arthur's engagement was told.

How many strange things were happening! so many that, as sometimes takes place in our dreams, there seemed no room or time for sur-

prise. But, little as Bob said, it was impossible not to feel that Arthur had fallen at last on an experience which would prove his salvation, as Fanny and Jimmie both pointed out, in such loving terms, Else's perfections.

"She is the ideal 'girl with no nonsense about her,'" said Fanny; "or, to speak in my own words, instead of Mr. Sparkler's, a true woman."

There was another reason why Bob found it hard to say much to this news about Arthur. His thoughts were very full of what he had to tell Jimmie. He looked at his brother, the glow of returning health on his cheek, and the quiet, bright look on his face which was its natural expression, and absolutely *could* not speak of the home anxiety about Geoffrey. It was not that he had not plenty of moral courage for his own share, but he shrank, as people with very tender hearts will, from seeing another person's grief.

At last he took counsel with Fanny as to whether it were best to tell Jimmie what he believed she was hearing for the first time. To his surprise, Fanny listened as quietly to his words as if she knew precisely what he was going to say, and when he was silent, only said, calmly, —

"My dear Bob, there is not a word of what you have told me that Jimmie and I did not know already."

"Jimmie?" Bob exclaimed. "But, Fanny, we have never mentioned it in our letters."

"Charley wrote to me," Fanny answered, "and I thought it best to tell Jim. Forgive me, Bob, if I did what I ought not, in taking the matter into my own hands; but I knew so well what I should wish in my own case!"

It was the only allusion Fanny had made to Jack, and Bob could only press her hand to express both his thanks and sympathy.

"How little Jimmie shows his anxiety!" he said, remembering his brother's placid face.

"Ah! he has been himself all over," said Fanny, brightly. "Jimmie and I have been a real 'Mutual Support' Society. He would not say a word, dear boy, to make me feel more sad, and the sight of him has helped to make me patient and cheerful in my own trouble. And then, besides, Bob, you know our Jimmie, in his quiet, peaceful little fashion, will always look on the bright side of everything, and he will not give up his belief that there is still hope."

So not a word passed between the brothers on the subject Bob had so dreaded.

Jimmie's only sign of anxiety was shown in the morning, when he said, "If only we need not stay here all day to see about those trunks at the custom-house! I am sure, Fanny, you are longing to be at home as much as I am."

"Why need you stay?" said Bob. "Am I not here to attend to it all? If you will have Jimmie as your escort for a day longer, Fanny, just take the Boston train this morning, and leave all the baggage business to me."

Fanny's ready assent showed how heartily she shared Jimmie's longing for home, and two hours later, Bob was again alone in New York. He had not said a word of Lillie, and Fanny had never suspected her presence in the city.

"Then you have not gone, Bob?" Lillie said, looking up, brightly, as he entered, that afternoon. "I heard the steamer was in this morning."

"No; I am here for a day longer, on custom-house business, and ready still to help you where I can, Lillie."

"O, there is nothing to be done," Lillie said, a

little sadly. "Uncle Henry thinks (and I am sure I do) that aunt Bella will never get over this. And, indeed, she never could be happy without what she has lost; so it seems almost selfish to wish that she might. People take trouble in such different ways."

"And how do you take it, Lillie?" Bob could not help saying.

"Why, I must feel as if it had done me good. I had been drifting along in such a selfish, giddy sort of way this summer, that it almost seemed as if I needed something to wake me up, and make me think. This has done it, Bob, and if it were not for uncle Henry and aunt Bella, who are the real sufferers, I should feel as if it had been a sort of blessing to me, no matter how sad it seems just now. But I am glad you will be here till Guy comes, Bob. It makes me feel so much less alone."

"Are you so very much alone, then?" Bob asked, abruptly.

Lillie looked at him for a moment, as if in surprise; then, as suspecting his meaning, colored, but answered, quietly, —

"I certainly have been. Whom have I?"

And here, again, Mrs. Melville's querulous voice ended the conversation, and Bob was still in the dark as to Steve Lenox.

As he sat alone, in the evening, almost regretting that his custom-house duties had gone off so smoothly, that all causes of detention in New York were removed, and that he must go home with the morning, the door opened, and Guy entered.

"You did right in sending for me, Bob," he said, when the two friends had talked the matter over. "There is need of a cool head in these sudden crashes, and poor uncle Henry seems quite unmanned. It has been a hard trial for little Lillie, too."

"She says it has been a blessing," said Bob, smiling.

"Yes," said Guy; "there is no telling what may be in a person, till he has had some trouble or responsibility to bring it out. I own I have done Lillie injustice. I did not credit her with so much firmness and sweetness, till I saw her with aunt Bella, this afternoon."

And then he laughingly quoted the quaint old lines, —

“‘Till from the straw the flail the corn doth beat,
Until the chaff be purged from the wheat,
Yea, till the mill the grains in pieces tear,
The richness of the flour will scarce appear.
So, till men’s persons great afflictions touch,
If worth be found, their worth is not so much;
*Because, like wheat in straw, they have not yet
That value which, in thrashing, they may get!’*”

“But, Bob,” he went on, “we must not detain you any longer, when you are, of course, so anxious to see the travellers. I shall remain here for a few days more, and Lillie will stay while there is any need for her. She feels it impossible to leave her aunt while she is in this state.”

“And where —” Bob began; then left his hearer waiting so long for the rest of his question, that Guy grew impatient, and asked, —

“Where is what?”

“On the whole,” said Bob, smiling, “I think I will not ask the question.”

CHAPTER XIX.

LAST LOOKS.

I AM beginning to feel now that the time is almost come for us to say good by to each other, and that there must be few more last looks into the world which the fortunes of my four boys have made such a real world to me, and I hope, in some measure, to you, too.

"But," you will say, "is it all to be left so? Are we to be in the dark as to Geoffrey's fate? Are we not to have another peep at Arthur and his German bride, and are you not going to give us a hint as to Lillie's future?"

All in good time. These are the very "last looks" which I shall ask you to take with me.

The first shall be at the room where Jimmie and Geoffrey had spent together their happy childhood, and where, on this evening of Bob's return home, the family were gathered to greet him.

How like a dream it had seemed! Little Lillie, meeting her brother with ill-concealed looks of joy, had begged him to let her blindfold him. "She had something with which she wanted to surprise him."

"Why, do you suppose I do not know as well as you that the travellers have got home, Lillie?" Bob had said. But he had yielded to her whim, and she had led him into this very room, which, since the departure of the twins on their separate roads in life, had been disused and shut up.

"Where are you, Bob?" his sister asked him.

"I should say, from the direction, in Jimmie's room. What now, Lillie? Are you going to show me Jimmie's self?"

"And *now*, Bob," said Lillie, with more and more of joy, and triumph, and excitement in her tones; "there, give me your hand; what do you feel?"

"Sheets, and a counterpane," said Bob, keeping on with the spirit of blind-man's-buff; "a pillow — a head on it. What! Is any one ill, then? And is *that* all the pleasant surprise you've got for me, Lillie?"

He stopped suddenly, for his hand had brushed

against a mass of soft, clustering curls that felt so like Geoffrey's own, that Bob could not say a word more. He stood as if bewildered, then pulled off the bandage, and saw Geoffrey lying before him! Geoffrey himself, only so much paler and thinner than his wont, that Bob looked at him as if in truth scarce knowing whether it were he or his shadow.

"There, Bob, there!" cried Lillie, clapping her hands in triumph at his face of wonder.

"Well, dear old 'blind-man,'" said Geoffrey, with the merry voice there *could* be no mistake about; "don't stare a convalescent quite out of countenance. I am myself, Bob, if I *am* just getting over a fever."

And then, as they sat around the bed, the story was all told; how, from that wild waste of waters, Geoffrey and the captain had been rescued by a passing ship, when, as Geoffrey said, with a shudder, "he had lost all hope of ever seeing home again, — when he had even lost all consciousness of being alive;" how this ship was outward bound for a voyage to the East Indies, and how they had gone, perforce, in that direction, passing no homeward-bound vessel which

they might hail for a speedier return; how, in this new experience, Geoffrey had seen more of the world, more of the sailor's life, more of new countries and people, but had nowhere found anything to compare with Captain Hawley, his generosity and kindness; how, at last, they were bound for home ("and I think," said Geoffrey, with a smiling glance at his mother, "no one knows so well as I do now what a place home is"); how he had sickened of a fever; how, on board the ship, his life had been despaired of, but the captain had watched over him night and day, and, with his declaration that he would never show himself to Mrs. Stanley without bringing back her boy with him, had absolutely seemed to *will* him back to health. And so it had happened that, when Jimmie had come home, with that faint little patient hope still lingering in his breast, his twin had been there to confirm it!

"And here we are," said Geoffrey, turning his head on the pillow to look at Jimmie; "and how strangely we seem to have changed places — Jim out in the world after adventures, and I lying here at home!"

"And is it to be 'at home,' in future, Geof-

frey?" Bob asked. "Have you had enough of the sea, and are you ready to settle down on shore?"

Geoffrey shook his head.

"I'm ready to settle down to be a sailor, Bob. No, no. I have been through too much of the rough part of a sailor's life to give it up readily, now that I have got to the smoother part. I shall lie here, and have my full share of petting, while I am getting well, because, as you know, it is such a rarity for me to be sick, that I consider it rather a pleasant luxury. Then we will go back to our studies—Jimmie at Cambridge, and I at the naval school: that's all the difference."

So Jimmie seemed to have learned, in going away, that he had the independence and self-reliance he so mistrusted in himself, and Geoffrey to have brought back from his travels the love for home he had fancied he lacked. Of what use are fresh experiences, if not to teach us new lessons for every-day life?

Our next look must be at Mr. Osborne and Jimmie, as they sit together, reading a letter which has just come from Heidelberg.

This step of Arthur's was a sore subject to the old gentleman, and it was a bitter disappointment, that all his darling schemes for his favorite grandson should end, as he contemptuously repeated, "in starvation over a drawing-board, and a match with a German peasant girl!"

So while, to the others, these proofs of the awakening in Arthur of a spirit of unworldliness and self-forgetfulness were the brightest auguries for his future, Mr. Osborne would not be softened by any of Fanny's glowing pictures of Else, but silently nursed his regret for the downfall of his ambitious hopes for Arthur.

But who could long resist Jimmie's loving persistence in showing the bright side? Not Mr. Osborne, surely.

"We have a letter from Arthur, grandpapa," he said, going up to the old man's chair. "I am sure it is meant, as much, or more, for you than for us. Would you like to see it, sir?"

"You may read it, if you like, Jimmie," said Mr. Osborne, with the tone of studied indifference he was so apt to assume when Arthur was mentioned; "though I doubt whether there is anything in it which I shall care to hear."

Nothing daunted by the ungracious assent, Jimmie sat down, and read aloud, —

I have thought so much of you all, since Jim and Fanny left; for though when one is as fixed and sure that his course is the true and right one as I am, nothing should turn him, I must care very much for your opinion of this step of mine. I know you will be surprised, and even, for a time, sorry, that I should have left my own country for a new one — perhaps hurt that I should have left you so readily. I know that you will distrust me (I fear I have deserved it), and doubt if I have acted from earnest motives. And yet I cannot help hoping that what I say, and what you hear from Jim, may change all this. I am sure you will feel, when I say it in all earnestness, that out of the many times I have disappointed you, this is the first in which you have little cause to complain, for it is the first in which I have acted from anything but selfishness. I am sure that when I tell you how much we think and speak together of home and you all, you will not feel that I have given up either my country or my family; and I cannot

help hoping that, as I tell you more of Else, you will be able to feel for her some of the love she is so anxious to win, so fearful she may not awaken. But I do not wish to speak of this engagement of mine as if there were anything of sacrifice about it. I have found out for the first time, in loving Else, what true happiness is. I have found out for the first time what an incentive it is to have the love of a noble, generous, true-hearted girl like her. I am sure I need say no more to you, dear father and mother, — to any one of you who has ever known what this true love is, — to make you feel sure of my sincerity, and ready to give your gratitude — your love, when you know her — to the girl who has helped me where I needed help so much.

Jimmie looked up almost pleadingly at his grandfather, as he finished the letter. Mr. Osborne did not speak, or even raise his eyes; but, as the fire flickered up in a bright burst of flame, Jimmie saw a shining tear-drop glisten on his hand, where it had fallen as he listened. He knew, as well as if Mr. Osborne had said it, that Arthur's words had touched the right chord, and

that the memory of grandpapa's own days of earnest, youthful love had softened away the bitterness of pique and disappointment. They sat silent, looking at the fire; then Mr. Osborne said, gently, "Tell Arthur, and Else, too, when you write, Jimmie, that they have all my wishes for their happiness."

It was a victory, gained in Jimmie's own sunshiny fashion.

Autumn was far advanced before Lillie returned to them, to make her home for the future with Guy and Sue, at Lakeside Hill. It was a much more attractive little face now, — the one which grandpapa called so fondly "his sunbeam," for there was a new and grave sweetness on it which had dawned there since Lillie's experience of responsibility, and share in the sorrows of others. Guy had been unwilling to urge his sister to leave her aunt, and she had remained with her till there was no further need for her. Mrs. Melville did not die, for, hard as it was to have lost all the wealth in which she had bound up her life happiness, people do not die of disappointments, or such privations as this. Perhaps

Mrs. Melville learned, in her narrower circumstances, that there is something better worth living for than money and display; but it was, and would be, such a hard lesson to her, that, for days after she came home, Lillie still looked as sad as when her aunt had shed floods of tears over her enforced departure from New York, and separation from her niece. And as sympathy for others is always more beautifying than repining for ourselves, it is no wonder that Lillie's new seriousness made her more attractive than ever.

There was one subject connected with Lillie on which all the household felt some curiosity. Had that letter of aunt Bella's been anything more than mere talk? If so, why did Lillie never speak of her engagement to Stephen Lenox?

At last, after Prissy had in vain tried, with all her shrewd wits, to elicit something from unconscious Lillie ("Though Prissy is a false prophet as regards all of us!" Fanny laughingly said), grandpapa innocently touched the trigger so many fingers had been burning to pull, and, one morning, as Lillie sat on the arm of his chair, chatting away in the winning fashion that had made her his pet for so long, said, abruptly, —

"So, Lillie, when have we got to give you up?"

"Give me up! To whom?" asked Lillie, with innocent surprise.

"Ah, the little puss! how well she acts!" said grandpapa, laughing. "You should know best, Lillie."

"Then I should say to nobody, for a long, long time, grandpapa."

"But does Mr. Lenox agree to that so readily, pray?"

"He? O, grandpapa!" said Lillie, coloring, "you did not really believe that of me—did you?"

"Why," said grandpapa, taking off his spectacles, and rubbing them vigorously in his confusion, "we surely heard something—didn't we? or was it all an invention of Mrs. Grundy, Lillie?"

Lillie shook her head.

"It was not entirely an invention, perhaps, but—Grandpapa, there was a time when I was so silly and selfish, and cared so much about money, and admiration, and flattery, that I really thought I could marry a man I did not in the least care for, just to have these things. I thought that,

if Mr. Lenox ever asked me to marry him, — as people said he would, — I should do it, if only because I should be envied. But, when it came to the point, I found I had been mistaken.”

“And Mr. Lenox found he had been mistaken, too?” said Mr. Osborne, smiling. “How was that, Lillie?”

“I think,” said Lillie, shaking her head, “that I am not so bad as I thought. I found out then, grandpapa, how little position, and admiration, and money seemed, unless there was a person *behind* it all, to love and respect! I do believe it is in me to do both these things with all my heart and soul; but, as it may be a long time before I find the person who is worth it all, you see it will be a long time before I ask you to give me up to any one!”

Grandpapa laughed, nothing loath to keep his pet; and Sue, hearing the talk, smiled over the contrast between the Lillie of to-day and the Lillie whose ambition in life had once been so widely different from Fanny's. I am not sure that she kept her pleasure in the change wholly to herself!

I should like to tell you more of Fanny and her life in the home world, which grew even more dependent on her sunny face and loving presence, till she needed no longer to ask the question she had once asked uncle Arthur — "What are girls good for?" — but found her best happiness in answering it for herself.

I should like to tell you more of Arthur, slowly working his way, through love and self-forgetfulness, to firmness and self-dependence; learning, practically, at last, that those are most truly happy in the world who are not of it.

I would gladly show you more of Bob, still bravely fighting his battles, with a zeal for the truth that would never be led astray by a desire for public favor, or a heart too faint to take shares with the unpopular side.

But it is time my little book should find its way, like its heroes, into the world. I can only tell you, before I let the curtain drop, that Bob's way in life was not to be a lonely one; that he found, in due time, an earnest little heart, ready to share and sympathize with his cares and interests, and that his own unconscious uprightness and honesty, which had helped to bring out

the genuine side of Lillie's nature, had won her deepest respect, and love as well. So not a few years of knowledge and experience of each other went to the making up of this third compact, between Bob and Lillie; and it was with hearts full of bright hope for the future, and warm love and trust in the present, that they took their first look together out into the world!

CHAPTER XX.

"ALL ABOUT IT."

SINCE I let the curtain fall on the little world of my heroes and heroines, it has been objected by friendly critics (belonging, surely, to that dear, particular school of mortals who like to know the wheres, and whens, and whys of everything under the sun), that one of the peeps I gave you is not of a satisfactory kind—that, namely, which concerns the coming together of Lillie and Bob. They say that, having been presented to the former as my heroine; having learned to know the latter as my hero; and having, moreover, made their way through two volumes in their company, they are surely entitled to hear, a little more at length, the chapter so interesting to most of us, in which the two propose henceforth to travel life's road together.

Now, for my own part, I think there are some

matters which should be known only to the parties concerned; and I am sure that neither you nor I would have been a welcome third on that occasion. Besides, I have always been sceptical as to the surprisingly quick ears and eyes of writers in general, who need surely have inherited the seven-league boots, if we take them at their own word, and believe they were in all places at once, and in time to hear and see all that passed between their different characters. Nevertheless, since you have listened so long and so patiently to my little drama, I should be ungrateful indeed if I slighted any token of further interest in the players on my stage. So, dear friends, I will do my best to tell you all I know of the important matter, even if I trust to the traditional "little bird in the air" for my information.

It happened, then, in this way. One day Bob came home with very bright eyes, and a large buff envelope protruding from his coat pocket. Whether or not Lillie the younger associated these two circumstances together, I cannot tell you; but certain it is that she immediately requested to know what "that gorgeous document was."

"A pleasant invitation," was Bob's smiling rejoinder.

But as curiosity is seldom satisfied with one answer, and Miss Lillie was blessed with a full share of her great-great-grandmother's failing, the mystery speedily received a more satisfactory solution. It seemed that, far off in the Great West, there were a little body of people who wanted to get together and make life as bright, and useful, and beautiful to as many of their fellow-mortals as they could; who wanted to seek for God's truth in the humble hope that as they found it, they might be able to work it into their lives, and worship him by their actions no less than by their tongues. And they had decided that nobody could help them better in this effort of theirs than the young man with the clear, steady eyes, the beaming face, and the hearty, straightforward manner, who had spent a few days among them during the last summer, and had spoken to them so earnestly in the little church. So they had sent to ask Bob Stanley to come and teach them all he could, and learn all they could teach him; and this, or something like it, was what the buff envelope contained.

When it had been read, all, of course, looked interrogatively at Bob, as people do when they want to get at another's intentions without the necessity of questioning him.

"I shall like it," said Bob, heartily. "It is all new there, and I like to begin at the beginning."

"And it's so satisfactory," said Fanny, "to do things for one's self—not find them already done, so that there's nothing left but to sit down and fold one's hands!"

"Yes," murmured Jimmie, with a quick sensitiveness for his dear Harvard, who had lavished her benefits so plenteously on his brother, "after one has got all the good the older places and the wiser people can teach him."

"So jolly," said Geoffrey, "to go off to a fresh, stirring, wide-awake place, and have all the pleasure of coming back to the dear old home for a change!"

"I don't mean to miss you at all, Bob," said his sister, reflectively. "O, you dear, I don't mean that; but you know it will be delightful to go out to the prairies for an unsophisticated atmosphere, when I am fairly surfeited with the conventionalisms of society."

"Wait till you're asked, ma'am," said Geoffrey, while the others laughed aloud. Lillie was just at that stage of her teens and her school-days when polysyllables are the readiest utterance.

"Why should I wait for that?" said the little lady, bridling, with some dignity. "I don't need invitations from Bob."

"But there are generally two parties in a household," said Geoffrey, mischievously; "who do you suppose will be the head of Bob's establishment?"

"It isn't at all improbable that I may be myself," said Lillie, quietly; "I always meant to be Bob's housekeeper, some day."

"No, no; not without our leave, Pussy," said her father, smiling; "we've no mind to part with our one girl, because our boys are all going."

There was one person who had made no comment on the contents of the buff envelope, and taken no share in the general discussion which followed its perusal. This was the other Lillie, who had sat quite silent while the rest expressed their opinions so freely; and yet, when Bob read the letter, he had several times glanced towards

that very corner where Lillie was seated, as if her sentiments were by no means the last which he desired to hear. Probably she was less interested than he had wished ; for it was not till Mr. Stanley had finished speaking, that a very non-chalant little voice remarked, —

“I always did dislike the West so much ! I mean the idea of it, for I’ve never been there in my life.”

“But why, Lillie ?” said Fanny, facing round immediately, as she always did when interested, or eager ; “why should you dislike it ?”

“O, I don’t know ; everything is so rough and unfinished, and there is so little culture and refinement. I can’t imagine any one who is used to our society being happy there.”

“But what a sweeping statement, Lillie !” said Fanny. “Besides, how would new places ever grow to be anything else, if nobody would go to them ?”

“I don’t like new places,” said Lillie.

“America, for instance,” suggested Geoffrey.

“But I didn’t come over in the Mayflower,” said Lillie. “I wouldn’t have done it, on any account. I don’t like deserts and wild Indians.”

"But I shan't see either, Lillie," said Bob. "I am not going into a wilderness. — is quite a city, and ten years hence it will be twice as large as it is now."

"O, will it?" said Lillie.

"You would be surprised if you could see how many advantages they have there," said Bob, going on very eagerly, though his auditor seemed far more engrossed in her work than in his words.

"O, should I?" said Lillie again. "Then, ten years hence, they will be far ahead of us, I suppose. Dear me, what a tiresome knot!"

I am afraid Lillie's lack of enthusiasm was rather a damper on the brightness of Bob's prospects, for he did not again allude to them that evening.

We grumble about our northern climate, our long, snowy winters, our tardy, chilly springs, and summers brief and burning; but surely our autumns should make some amends to us — the golden October days, when the air seems all sunshine, the trees stand out in their many-colored dresses against the clear blue sky, and every-

thing seems full of life, and energy, and joyfulness.

"Come," said Geoffrey, on just such a day, "it's a sin to mope this perfect weather away in town. I don't know whether mother, and Fanny Osborne, and Pussy-cat are making a trunkful of keepsakes for you, Bob, but I should think so, from the way they stick to their needles. I'll tell you what we'll do. I haven't many more chances of fun on shore. Let's forget we are growing such a crowd of old fogies, and go out to Lakeside Hill, and have just such a frolic as we used to have. The nuts are all ripe there, and I'm not too old, for one, to want some. Come, who's for Lakeside? Unless I am much mistaken, or Lillie Dalton's grown fonder of sewing than she used to be, she'll be gladder to see us than to stay at home stitching any amount of love and remembrance into handkerchiefs and cravats for you, Bob!"

As Geoffrey would never be anything but a boy, whoever else might turn old fogy, — a boy, moreover, as eager for fun and frolic as any in school-boy jackets, — and as there were very few wishes expressed by this well-grown family pet

which were not immediately acceded to, the party were speedily *en route* for Lakeville, — as speedily as shade-hats, sun-umbrellas, and other preparations for a day in the woods, or on the pond, could be got together.

Probably Lillie Dalton still justified Geoffrey's expectations, and was not fond of work under any form. There was a certain set of old-fashioned gold purse-rings which she had found in grandpapa's desk, and coaxed away from him, and a certain green silk purse in process of crocheting, which got on so very, very slowly, that I almost think it must have been associated with some unpleasant thought in Lillie's mind, so readily was it abandoned for anything else that offered. That purse was meant as a parting present to Bob, but it was thrown aside with great alacrity when the merry crowd appeared in the many-tinted avenue before the window at which the little maiden sat crocheting.

"Go? Yes; of course I'll go," said Lillie, in answer to Geoffrey's proposal. "I'm tired to death moping in doors alone, and I was just wishing for some of you."

And Lillie, flying up stairs, speedily reap-

peared in the hall, a broad straw hat tied down with blue ribbons over her curls, buff gauntlets pulled over her pretty little hands, and the green silk ball of that tiresome purse thrust deep into her pocket.

The hill, which sloped away so gently behind the old brown stone house, was thickly clothed with chestnut woods, whose fading, yellow leaves scarcely hid the ripe nuts, clinging as desperately to the half-parted lips of their prickly cases, as if they felt how near their end was approaching. Here and there a scattered maple lit up the grove with its blaze of flame-color, and at the base of the hill lay the little pond, as blue as in midsummer, though the lilies with which, in August, it was so thickly studded, had left only unsightly pads as their tokens. Far across the woods, on the other side of the valley, the hills rose against the clear sky with almost a purple bloom on their summits, and there was not a sound or motion in the little grove, except the occasional "Caw, caw," of some distant crow, lamenting over the fallen cornfields, the tap, tap, of a woodpecker, or the light-footed sally of some squirrel, who whisked nimbly over the gray stone wall, darted on a nut,

and was gone. But, as the merry party entered the wood, loaded with baskets and nutting-poles, and sending their ringing voices and laughter before them, these sounds disappeared. The squirrel did not so much as show a hair of his feathery tail beyond his hole, and the woodpecker ceased his tapping to listen to the crackling footsteps coming so briskly over the dead leaves.

"Look there," cried Geoffrey, with a preliminary shake of the nearest tree, which sent the nuts rattling down in a smart shower on the heads of those below; "isn't that a rich harvest? Fill your baskets, and let's have something to show for our expedition. Picnics, you know, are generally said to be profitless things — this shall be an exception."

Geoffrey's mood communicated itself to the rest. Bob scaled the tree, and shook the lighter branches; the others assaulted the sturdier boughs with their sticks; and the girls, with laughing efforts to avoid the pelting on the crowns of their straw hats, picked up the shining nuts as they dropped thick and fast on the grass.

"Why, Lillie," said her little namesake, as that unlucky purse came ravelling out of Lillie's

pocket at the end of one of her gauntlets, "is that all you've got done? You'll never finish it in time, if you mean it for Bob."

"Very likely not," said Lillie, with the shade of vexation that hapless piece of work always called up; "I can't help it if I don't."

"O, bother the knitting," said Geoffrey, dropping his pole, breathless, and pushing back the clustering curls from his hot forehead; "I hope you didn't bring that to the picnic. Come, Fan and Lillie, let's go down to the boat. We'll leave Bob and Jimmie and the rest to see to the fire and the spread, and float about a little on that deliciously lazy pond. I feel just like a glorious lounge, after my exertions with this battering-ram!"

Lillie, who had so far been Geoffrey's walking companion, assented at once, and Fanny, who had been strolling along with Bob, followed, with a smiling shrug of the shoulders, and roguish glance at the latter. Fanny was one of those people who know everybody's secrets—a fact which she owed, I think, more even to the ready sympathies which invited confidence, than to the sharp eyes which saw things for themselves.

The scene from the boat, as they slowly pulled out over the lily-pads, was a pretty one; the fire, just beginning to crackle under the auspices of the party left on the bank, the scattered poles and baskets, the bright foliage, and, far up on the slope, Guy and Sue, just coming in sight over the brow of the hill, bearing substantial additions to the feast. Robin pranced before them, as active as his namesake, the nimble sprite, Robin Goodfellow, his red stockings forming an additional speck of color in the landscape, and little "Miss Toddlekins" laboriously trotted through the long grass, holding by her mamma's skirt.

Geoffrey, the better to enjoy his "glorious lounge," had resigned the oars to the two girls, and lay back in the bow of the boat, surveying their executions with a lazy smile, and looking like a young Bacchus, his temples crowned with a wreath of grape-vine leaves, which Lillie had woven as they walked along, while his straw hat, cast carelessly down in the bottom of the boat, lay beside him.

Fanny rowed as vigorously as she did everything else, her cheeks glowing and her dark eyes sparkling under the broad, shady hat, while her

companion pulled a much less steady stroke, stopping to examine the blisters on her little hands, with a reproachful look at the lazy figure in the bow, or glancing over her shoulder at the party on shore.

“ ‘Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depths of some divine despair
Rise to the heart and gather to the eyes
In looking on the happy autumn fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more!’ ”

murmured mischievous Fanny, who had noted the regretful glances.

“What are you saying, Fan?” said Geoffrey; but just then Lillie, by a vexed exclamation, called the general attention to her oar, which was just floating away beyond its wielder’s grasp.

“What shall I do?” she exclaimed; “how could I have dropped it? Geoffrey, do try to get it. I am sure your arm is long enough to reach.”

But Geoffrey, declaring they had undertaken to “paddle their own canoe,” entirely refused to exert himself, and looked on, more amused than ever, as Fanny vigorously sculled in pursuit, or

pulled the boat round and round, while the provoking oar steadily drifted down the stream.

"It's no use," said Lillie, looking half inclined to cry, as Fanny paused at last, breathless with her fruitless endeavors. "How shall we ever get ashore? I hear them calling us —"

"Signal in token of distress!" said the exasperating Geoffrey, fluttering his handkerchief from the blade of the useless oar, while he still lay at his listless length in his seat.

"I'm not beaten yet!" said Fanny, springing up with an energy that almost capsized the little boat. "There, Lillie, stand up at your end, and hold a corner of this shawl. Don't you feel what a breeze comes from that quarter? There! now we shall scud along like a full-rigged merchant-man! Don't you admire my seamanship, Jeff?"

And away they went across the pond, with laughing encomiums from Geoffrey, and many a shriek from Lillie, who was decidedly timorous in her insecure perch, and not a little inclined to let fall her corner of the extempore sail. In fact, so much faster did they go than they had calculated, that before they knew it, they were aground in a thick lily-bed, where the missing

oar, arrived before them, was already safely lodged, and Bob, having come down, in answer to their signal of distress, was waiting to help them ashore.

"I shall never sail again with Geoffrey for ballast!" said Fanny, springing lightly ashore, with the aid of Bob's proffered hand. "Come, you provoking boy, I shall take you into custody immediately, and make you do all the menial offices of our cooking!"

And off she led him, however reluctant, leaving Bob and Lillie together.

But what was the matter with Lillie to-day? Generally so light-footed and graceful, she had sprung ashore so carelessly that she had a wet foot for her pains, and her pretty skirt was splashed with water.

"Never mind," said she, beginning to walk quickly, with a vexed air, after Fanny and Geoffrey; "I was never so clumsy in my life, I believe! Don't say anything about it, please—it's nothing!"

"Suppose we go off, and dry the dress in the sun," Bob laughingly suggested; and he led her off, by quite a different little wood-path, to a

cleared space, where the sunbeams lay dancing brightly on the dry grass.

But here a new misfortune developed itself. That everlasting purse, pulled out of Lillie's pocket again, had been following merrily in the wake of the boat, and now trailed, limp and water-stained, behind its fair crocheter as she walked.

"There, it's all spoiled!" said Lillie, taking it up as they threw themselves down on the grass. "And I meant it for you. I shall have nothing to give you, Bob."

"Never mind," said Bob; "I shall have enough keepsakes."

Then, as Lillie still bent her head over the meshes, pulling out the drenched silk with no very mollified air, he added, —

"There is no danger of my forgetting home, Lillie, even if I had none to remind me."

"I am not so sure of that," said Lillie, shaking her head. "That is what people always say, but they are sure to change in a new atmosphere."

"Do you think, then, that I shall forget so easily?" said Bob, half amused at the vehement conviction in Lillie's tone.

"You think not, now."

"Then why are you so sure I shall change?"

"Because you are so glad to go."

"Everybody is glad to be at work, I suppose," said Bob.

"But you are so glad your work is to be in just that — that far-off, rough, *new* place!"

"I am glad it is to be in a new place, certainly," said Bob; "because it is so much easier to start afresh in everything — not have to work on other people's foundations. But I did not say I was glad it was far off — did I?"

"You are so glad to leave everything here!" said Lillie, carefully spreading out the bespattered front breadth of her dress in the sun.

"I don't think I said so," said Bob.

There was a long pause — so long that that woodpecker, tapping in a tree close by, had time to grow decidedly monotonous, and the crickets, piping in the grass, became actually ear-piercing in their shrillness. It was a silence so long that there is no telling how much longer it might not have lasted, if Bob, looking earnestly at Lillie, as she sat with her broad hat pulled down over her face, had not suddenly noticed a singular

phenomenon. One — two — three little drops, which certainly had not been there a few minutes before, lay glistening on the pretty gray dress just in the place which Lillie had been so carefully holding in the sunbeams!

Bob got up from the grass and walked to the opening in the trees, through which he could catch a glimpse of the party still busily employed over the fire — turned, and came back so suddenly, that Lillie had no time to avert her face, and the eyes which she had raised to follow Bob's motions, with the tear-drops still glistening on their lashes, were quite visible.

"No, I never said so," repeated Bob; "so far from it that I am constantly trying to persuade myself that I needn't leave some things — or rather, people; so far from glad that I am often very unreasonably unhappy in vain regrets that I must."

"Why vain?" said Lillie.

"Because I've been told so."

"Who told you?" said Lillie, lifting her eyes quite regardless of the two great drops which chased each other down her cheeks.

"You yourself."

"You had no right to believe what any one said of me. It wasn't any one's concern."

"Not when that some one was yourself? Not when that some one said she could not imagine being happy in such a different atmosphere from this?"

"You never asked me if I could," said Lillie.

"But you said you could not imagine any one who was used to our society being happy there. How could I ask you, then?"

"I was speaking of *you*," said Lillie, naïvely; then, softly, while the smiles would play in and out of her tear-stained cheeks, "wasn't that such a very different thing?"

There was another silence for a minute or two, while a thrush in the trees over their heads trilled out a full, rich note. For aught I know, he may have been the identical "little bird" who repeated all this to me!

"Then I *may* ask you, Lillie?" It seemed a very superfluous thing to say, because at the moment Bob was holding one of Lillie's hands, and looking at her with so very bright a smile that the idea of suspense or uncertainty seemed quite out of the question.

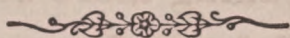
"If you think me worth while," said Lillie, in an odd little tone; then, lifting her eyes again to Bob's face, and speaking more seriously, —

"O, Bob, dear, I know I'm not half you think me, but I do mean to grow to be more, and you will help me. I shall try so hard to be good enough for you, and to make you happy!"

"You won't have to try very hard, Lillie," said Bob; and I think his face showed it.

Indeed, it showed so much to Jimmie, who looked through the trees just at that moment, to call the missing pair to lunch, that he discreetly turned down another path, making the woods echo with their names; and, as the lovers stepped down the sunny little glade to the shore, fancying their secret still secure, it was so plainly written in their happy faces, that every one of the waiting party read it at once as they approached; and it is, perhaps, after all, no treason, if I repeat it to any one who cares to listen!

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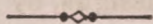
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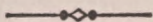
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